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volume 27 number 5
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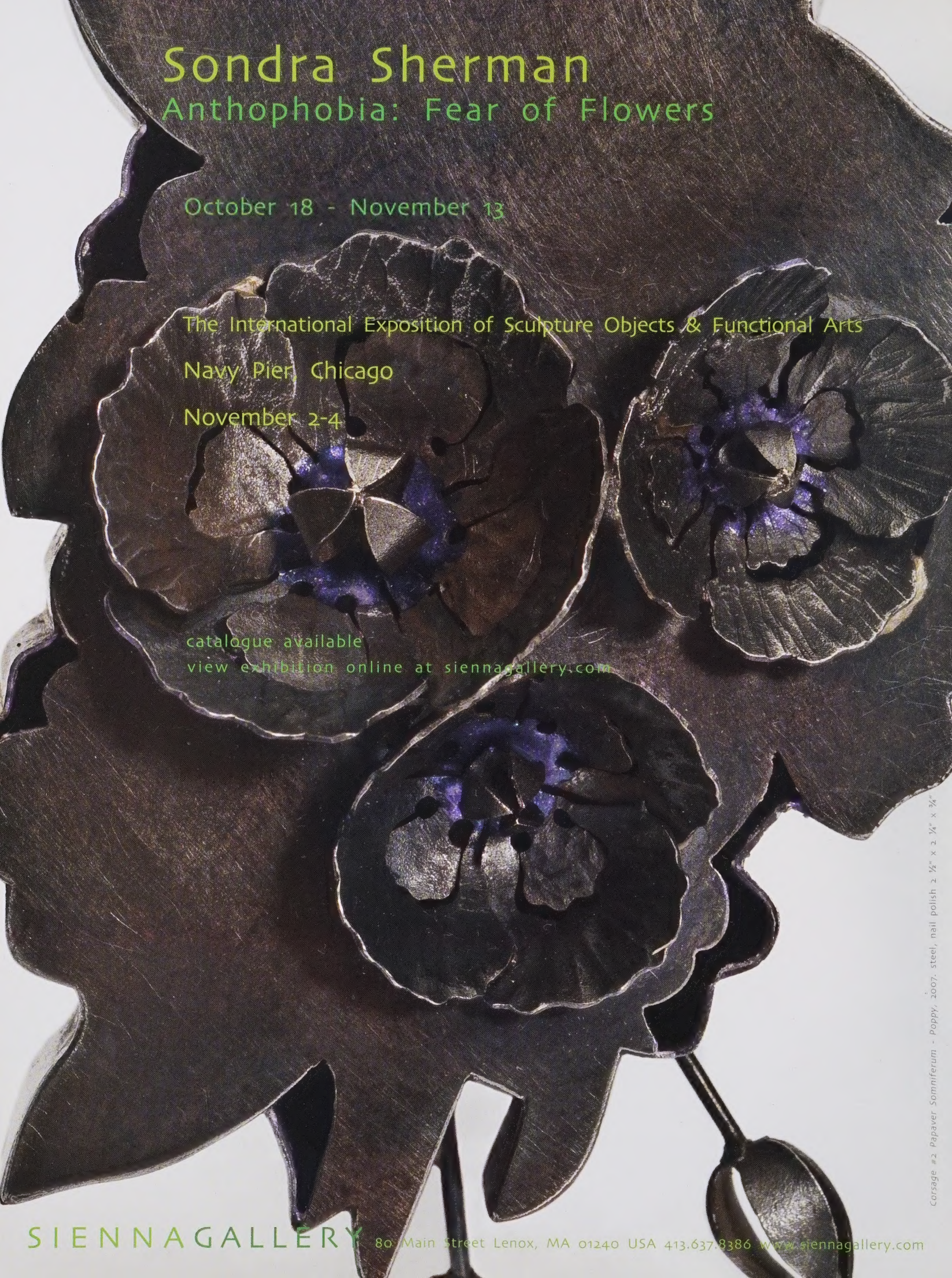

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cover
Ted Noten
Bitch Bag, 2005
icepick, gold ring, synthetic gemstones, and cocaine cast in acrylic, textile, cultured pearls
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FROM THE EDITOR

SUZANNE RAMLJAK

A magazine is a collection of voices—describing, defending, persuading, cajoling. This issue of *Metalsmith* harbors a number of reproachful voices, offering challenges or prods to the field. Like many scolds, these pleas for change are borne of a love for the assailed subject. Rather than watch one's peers languish or flounder, one spurs them to action through accusation.

Perhaps the most adversarial voice belongs to cover artist Ted Noten, whose work is fueled by his "annoyance and frustration" with much contemporary jewelry. His Manifesto of the New Jewellery warns: "Unless the self-inflicted isolation is radically abandoned, the discipline will have to settle for its position in the fringes of the fringes." In choosing the "gallery over the shop, the collection over the street, the conversation between friends over social interaction," Noten finds most jewelers guilty of neglecting their public mandate.

The Opinion column, "Let's Blog," conveys a similar tone of impatience regarding how metalsmiths can remain relevant, especially to a younger market. Arguing for the need for new tactics, the writer's urge, "We must establish stronger online visibility.... We need a web-based representationan online that reflects the depth and breadth of our field."

In her Munich Dossier, Ursula Neuman takes a passing swipe at American museums and galleries, with their safe and sterile modes of display. Extolling the experimental jewelry installations found in Europe, she advises, "Museums take note: it is time to devise a security system that allows for innovative presentations."

After bemoaning the lack of career training in most art schools, and the disappointing work at craft fairs, interviewee Paul Smith addresses the homogenization and declining specialization in the market and academy. He declares, " I defend attention to craft as a specialized area of the arts in the broadest sense. Not as a way of isolating it, but in order to strengthen it."

In the end, all of the charges launched in this issue are aimed at fortifying the field. They are also offered with the knowledge that, ultimately, each of us must find our own way to thrive, in spite of any criticism. As Ted Noten's manifesto slyly prescribes: "Jewellery must ignore all prescription...." ◘

METALSMITH

a publication of SNAG, the organization for jewelers, designers, and metalsmiths

***Metalsmith's* mission is to document, analyze, and promote excellence in jewelry and metalworking.**

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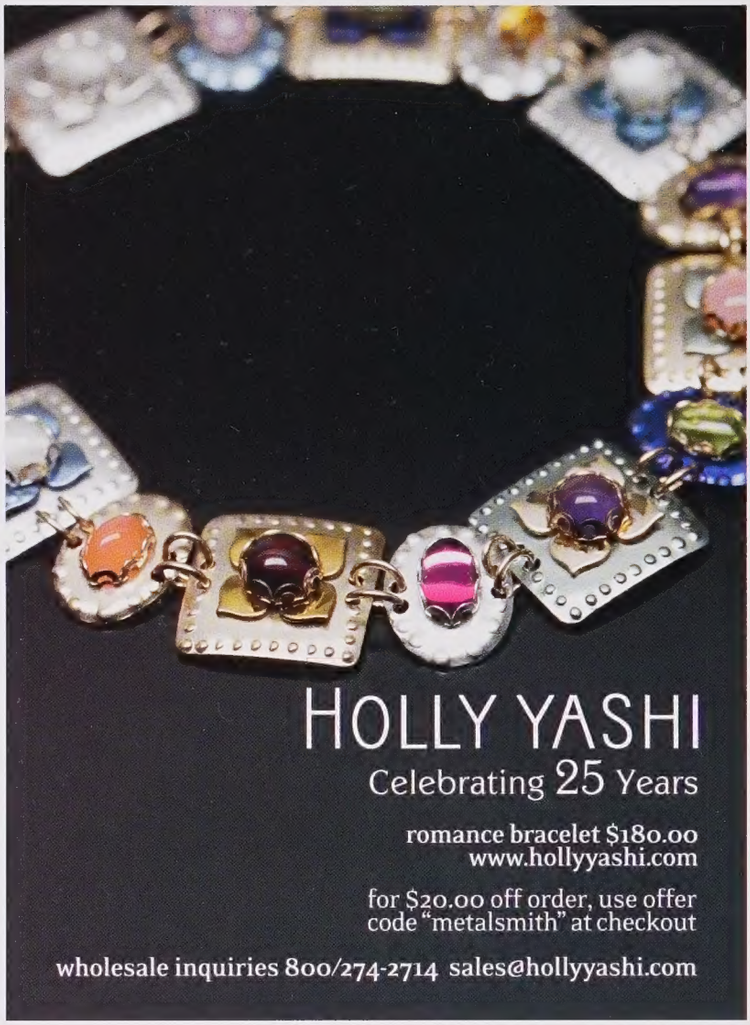
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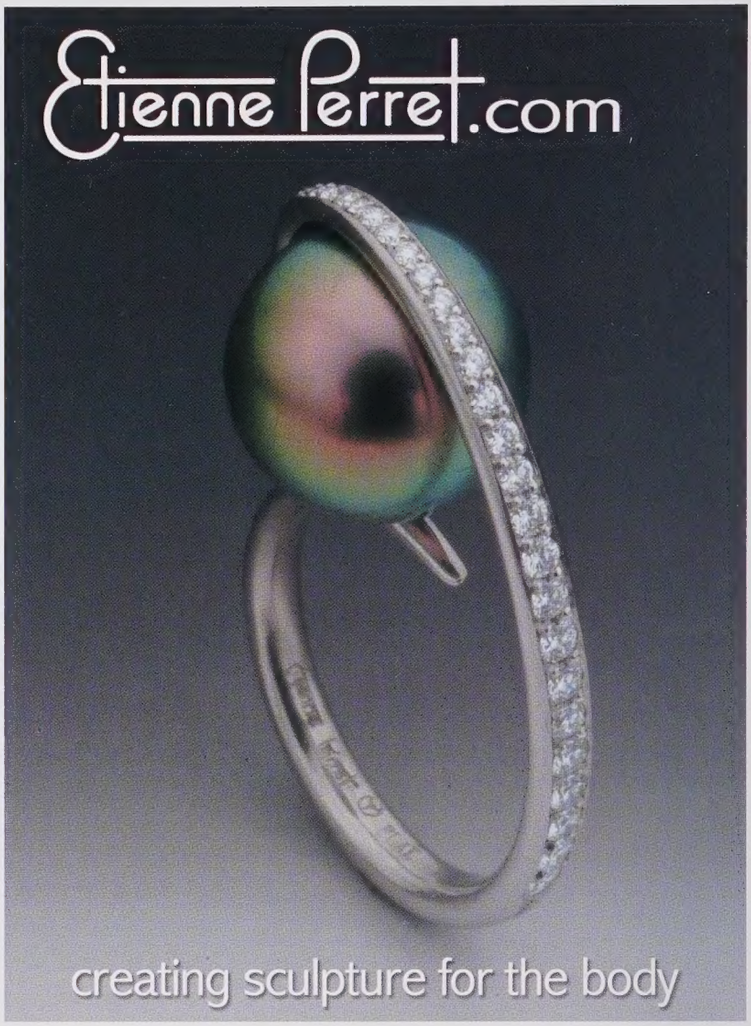
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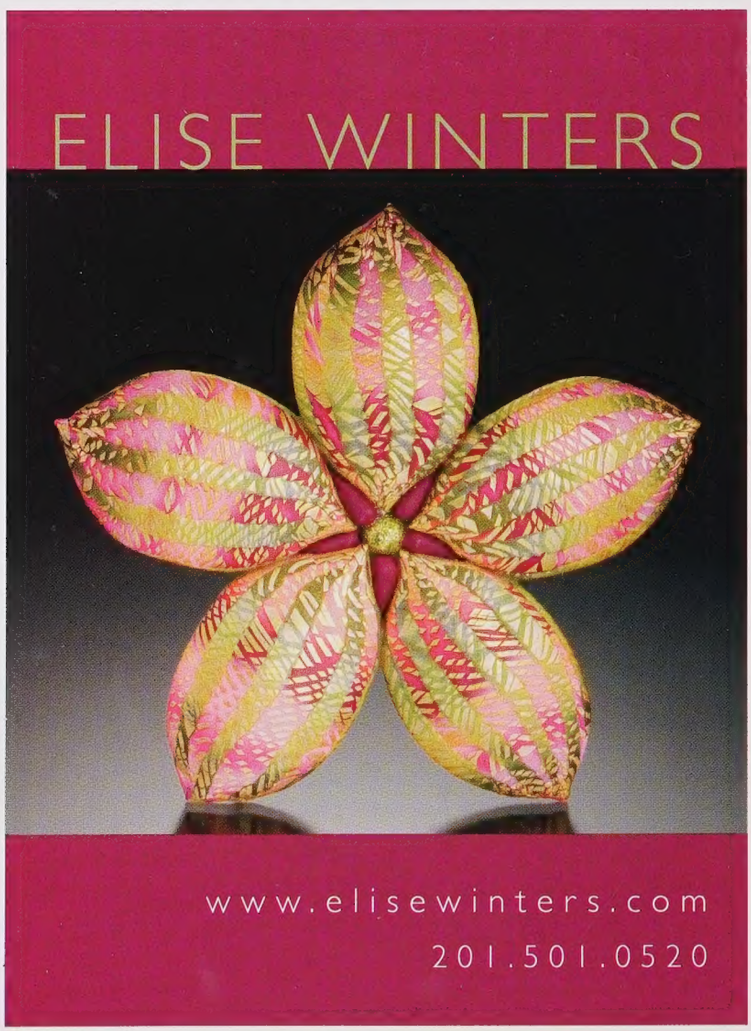
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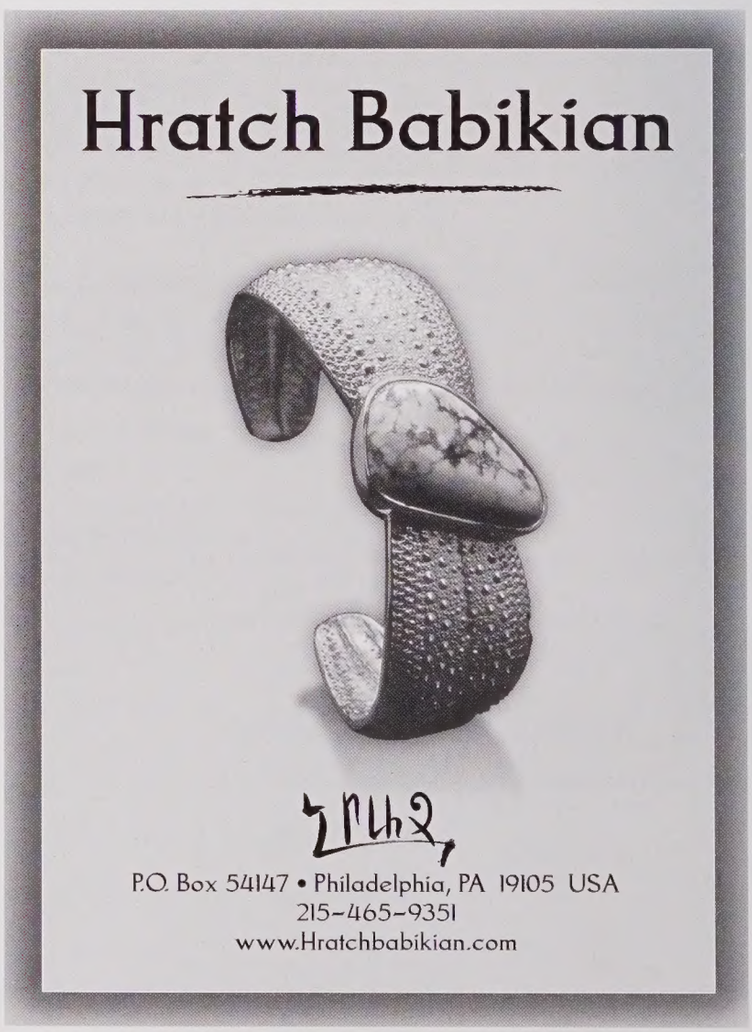
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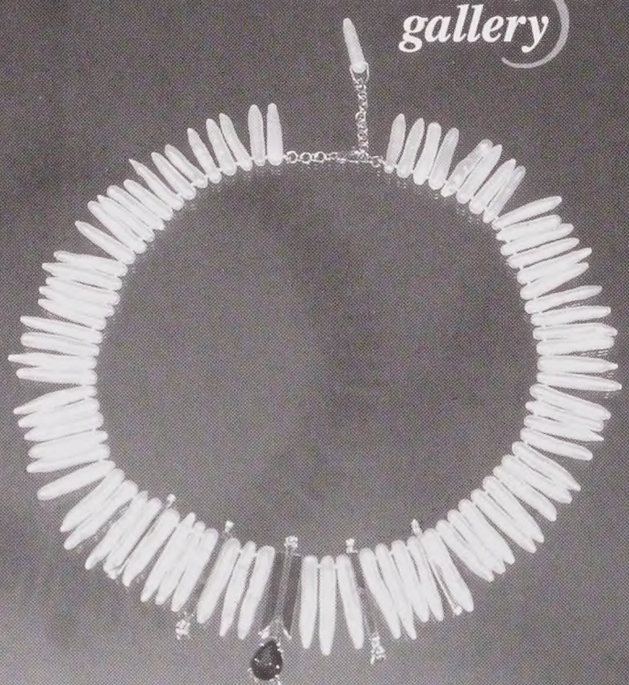

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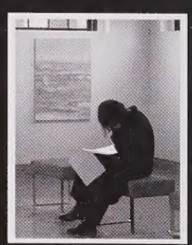

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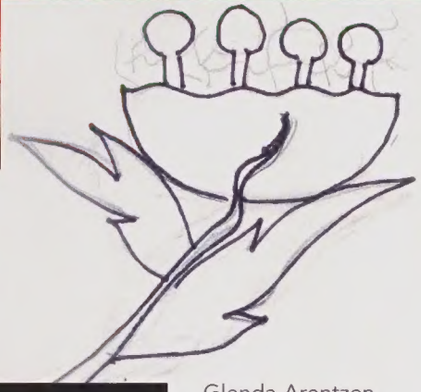

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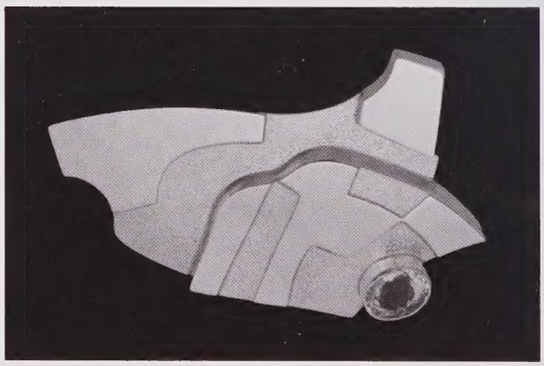

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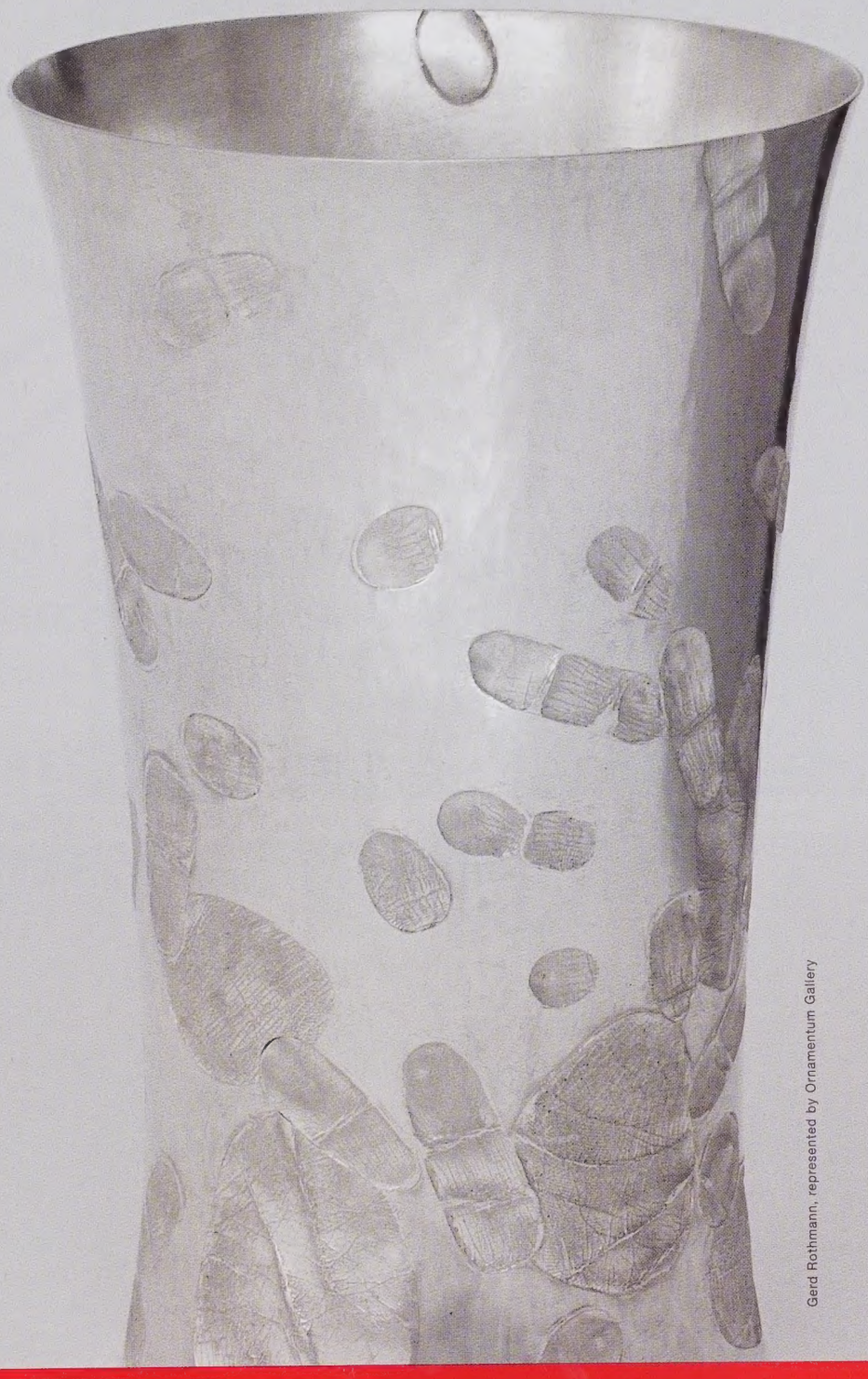

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PRINT

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OPINION

by Corey Ackelmire and Megan Auman

Let's Blog

In an article in the fall 2003 issue of *Metalsmith*, titled "Shaping our Future," jeweler Donald Friedlich noted that the attendees at SOFA and the ACC shows, as well as the vendors themselves, seemed to be getting older every year. Where, he wondered, was the under-35 crowd, and more importantly, the future generation of our field? Friedlich cited the Craft Organization Directors Association's 2001 *Economic Impact Study of Craft*, which found that the average age of the craftspeople surveyed was 49, further underscoring our need to "energize and retain new generations of metalsmiths and lovers of metal work" if we are to survive as a field.

However, investigation into this dearth of young crafts artists and buyers at the traditional venues reveals that young people have not left the field. They have simply developed alternative venues. They are online. In this online community, SNAG, and many of its members, lack a vital presence. We must expose this audience to what our field has to offer, and in so doing, help to secure our future. We must establish stronger online visibility.

Obviously, developing one's own artist website is a good way to begin to create an online presence. Today numerous software programs and web development professionals can make the process simpler. Having your own web site is not, however, the only way to include yourself in the online craft community, and by itself, is often not enough. Blogs, online photo-sharing sites, and online storefronts also help artists promote their work on the web. Such user-defined, web-based facilities, collectively known as Web 2.0 because they represent "second generation web services," have advantages over traditional websites, including ease of use and the ability to build online communities.

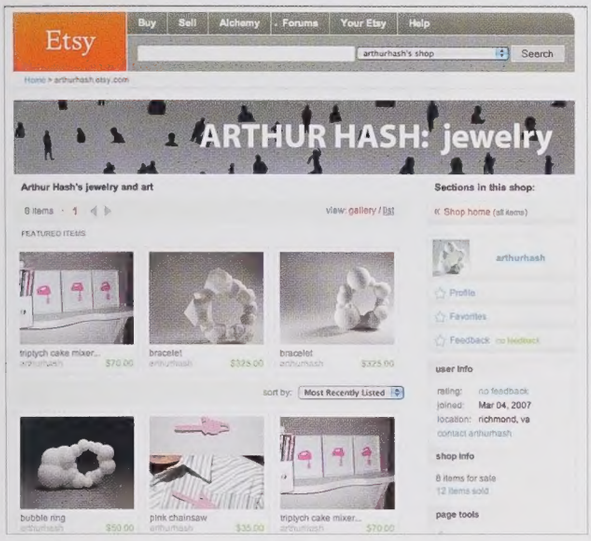
Web 2.0 technologies and their possibilities are epitomized by the thriving community of online blogs. Blogs (derived from the term "web log") are characterized by frequently updated content in the form of posts; each new post appears at the top of the web page. Blogging, or maintaining a blog, allows the blog author the opportunity to publish information about art, craft, and design in a way that fosters online networking more than a standard web site. The main purpose of a blog is to showcase new and interesting information, and blogs readily allow readers to learn about the work shown through their numerous links to artist websites, galleries, and other artist- or designer-run blogs. The format also allows its authors the opportunity to engage their readers through a range of media beyond the traditional images and text, including video and podcasts.

There are four types of blogs particularly relevant to the craft world, which can be loosely referred to as artist blogs, independent design blogs, theory blogs, and publication-based blogs.

Artist blogs are run by individual makers and are often linked to the artist's web site, though having a web site is not a prerequisite. Such blogs range from an online sketchbook of inspirational images and materials, to a promotional tool that informs customers about upcoming events. Unlike a traditional website, the blog format lends itself to frequent updating, which helps maintain repeat viewers. Artist blogs can also serve as a record of a particular project, allowing potential customers to feel invested in an artist's process, and therefore, more attracted to the work. In addition, most blog authors maintain a list of links to their favorite blogs, making it possible for people to cross promote and easily discover others with similar topics.

For those artists not interested in the upkeep of a personal blog, several independent blogs offer another opportunity to gain exposure in the online marketplace. While some design blogs are media- or object-specific, such as 18kt.blogspot.com, other design blogs are more far-reaching in scope and feature objects that range from pillows to artist's prints (designsponge.blogspot.com). Reading blogs, like a magazine or other publication, can help one stay informed about the field as well as provide inspiration for one's own work. In addition to being informative, these blogs frequently publish images and links for aspiring makers and independent designers. This free publicity can be extremely beneficial for craft-based businesses as it exposes one's work to a market that is already searching for interesting items. In a recent

above
Home page (July 17, 2007) for designsponge.blogspot.com



correspondence, Grace Bonney, the author of the Design*Sponge blog, reported an audience of more than 22,000 unique readers (not just page views) daily. Her audience includes the editors of many major magazines, and exposure on her site has helped to launch the careers of numerous artists.

Like design blogs, theory blogs are usually run by individuals or groups who are not only interested in promoting intelligent craft, but also in discussing and critiquing it. These blogs, such as www.redefiningcraft.com, are especially useful for information on exhibitions of art and craft. And like all blogs, they allow readers to post comments about the subjects they debate, thereby facilitating real-time discussions of contemporary issues facing the world of crafts.

Many publications are now recognizing the value of blogs as a way to complement their traditional newsstand presence. A blog provides the opportunity to connect with readers on a daily basis, something a print magazine does not allow. *Make* and *Craft* magazines maintain blogs that are updated several times a day. Other magazines, such as *House & Garden*, feature multiple, topic-specific blogs, each with their own author.

Beyond the informative benefits of the blog, there are, as previously stated, financial benefits. By linking images of artist work with retail web sites, blogs tap into the lucrative market of online shoppers. One of the simplest ways craft artists can sell directly to customers via the Internet, even without their own website, is through Etsy.com. Etsy.com is an online marketplace, where designers can sell handmade work directly to the consumer. On Etsy, each seller is given a virtual storefront to stock with items. Patrons can shop by artist, item type, color, and other categories. Items are shipped directly from the maker to the customer, and payment is simplified by secure servers like Paypal.com, a service already familiar to millions of eBay users.

Etsy.com displays a wide range of goods and price points. Admittedly, some of what is sold is of questionable quality, but collectors of intelligent and interesting jewelry and metalwork are not born, they are made, through education and exposure to the best of what our field has to offer. The more conceptually strong jewelry and metalwork that appears on Etsy, or other online shops, the more we will inform the online craft market of our strengths. This movement has already begun with artists like Arthur David Hash, featured in *Metalsmith*'s 2006 juried "Exhibition in Print." Hash sells work on Etsy that is similar to what he exhibited within the EiP.

Establishing a shop on Etsy.com is free. Since its beginning in June 2005, the web site boasts that more than 380,000 handmade items have been sold. Etsy charges just 20 cents for each listed item, and takes only 3.5 percent of every sale. It is easy to see the appeal of selling through such a venue when one considers the booth fees and display and travel costs of traditional craft shows, as well as the higher commission rates charged by many galleries. While it seems unlikely that online stores will ever replace the appeal, and advantages, of actually being able to touch an artist's work before purchasing it, Etsy nonetheless represents a valuable market, with its nearly 200,000 registered users.

...Collectors of intelligent and interesting jewelry and metalwork are not born, they are made, through education and exposure to the best of what our field has to offer.

Etsy is only one of the online marketplaces for craft; others include Guild.com, which may be familiar to those in the craft show circuit, and Elsewares.com, an online shop for indie-design. Regardless of venue, the essential point is making one's work available to the vast online market. We need a web-based representation online that reflects the depth and breadth of our field. If SNAG and its membership is wondering how to remain relevant to the younger market, it may be time to try some new tactics. We will recapture that market simply by participating in it.

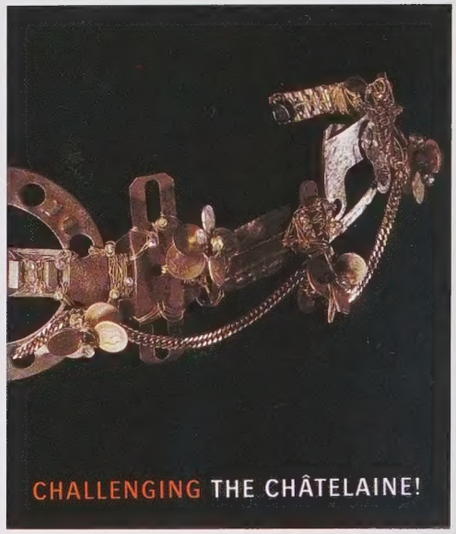
Corey Ackelmire is a metalsmith currently living and working in Carbondale, Illinois.

Megan Auman is a Pennsylvania-based artist and designer who maintains a blog at webforjewelers.blogspot.com.

above
The artist page of jeweler
Arthur David Hash on Etsy.com

BOOKS

by Andrea DiNoto



Challenging the Chatelaine!

Helen Williams Drutt English and Kimmo Sarje, Designmuseo, Helsinki, Finland, 2006

The chatelaine is an archaic accessory, basically a belt ornament comprised of a set of implements, like keys or tools, hung at the waist. As such, it provided Helen Williams Drutt English with an idea: Why not invite a group of artists to create their version of it, but stipulate that it must be dedicated to their choice of "role model"? The role model concept had worked well for her 1998 traveling exhibition, "Brooching it Diplomatically," for which artists created brooches for the role model Madeleine K. Albright, the former Secretary of State, known for her semiotic brooch wearing. For this exhibition, Drutt English supplied 78 internationally known jewelry artists with background information on the chatelaine. In due course, the artists began sending in their interpretations, which in turn composed the catalogue and traveling exhibition, *Challenging the Chatelaine!*, which opened at the Designmuseo in Helsinki last year.

The results range from insightful to amusing to just plain odd—one artist chose the platypus as a role model, another the Siamese twins Chang and Eng—but that would have been predictable. Artists don't really like to be told what to do, and most loosely interpreted "role model" to mean someone they admired or who tickled their fancy. It was an upbeat exercise with only one artist, Peter Skubic, going negative, with an ironic "homage" to George Bush featuring frat-boy paraphernalia. The reasons for the artists' role-model choices were set forth in their statements—essential to the understanding of the works. These texts, paired with images of both the role models and the chatelaines, are reproduced in the full-color catalogue, which can be fascinating to read simply as a clue to how artists think.

As with the exhibition, the catalogue's introductory material provides some (minimal) historical background on the chatelaine. The word originally meant "mistress of the castle," but it came to describe the keys and implements the mistress wore suspended from chains at her waist; a symbol of authority that evolved into a trendy nineteenth-century accessory. The oldest known chatelaines, which date from the twelfth century (examples have been found in Anglo-Saxon graves), were no-nonsense affairs hung with everyday tools such as knives, scissors, and smelling bottles (used to offset the stench of the street). By the sixteenth century, chatelaines included pomanders, mirrors, books of hours (for prayer), and sometimes even writing tools (inkwells, ivory sheets for note taking, signet seals) as well as ear picks (for wax removal), sewing implements, and, by the eighteenth century, watches. By then the clunky had been replaced by the exquisite; the chatelaine became a gilded metal equipage that bespoke elegance as much as office, for both women and men. (The watch fob, an ornamental chain that hung from the man's pocket, evolved from the chatelaine.) The form diversified into finger ring, bracelet, and wrist chatelaines made from a wide range of materials—gold, diamonds, shagreen, leather, and Irish bog oak, to name a few—and in highly specialized categories. Nurses' versions held thermometers and pulse glasses, while sportswomen carried quivers for arrows and a grease box for softening leather gloves. In other words, the chatelaine could function as an expression of a person's style, occupation, passions, and sensibilities, in varying forms. All of these elements are present in the contemporary chatelaines created for the show in a tremendous variety of materials.

Almost more interesting than the objects themselves are the artists' choices of role models. A number selected other artists—not surprising—but writers, politicians, royalty, great chefs, and scientists were also cited. No one chose a parent, one chose his wife, and a few, possibly confused by or dismissive of the role model mandate, honored abstractions; in one case a piece of music, in another, "homeless people." Only a few performers were chosen: Sandra Zilker commemorated Carmen Miranda, the '40s-era Brazilian bombshell, with silver cagelike fruit, symbolizing the

prison and transparency of her show-biz persona; for his favorite diva, Maria Callas, Gijs Bakker (with no reference at all to the chatelaine form) designed liquid-filled earrings resembling optical lenses (Callas was short-sighted); and for Dame Joan Sutherland, Arline Fisch evoked the memory of daffodils strewn for "Joanie" at a Covent Garden curtain call. The cartoon characters Cinderella and Shrek each rated a suitably adorable soft-fabric chatelaine, while Ruth Handler, founder of the Mattel company and creator of the iconic Barbie

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doll, was aptly memorialized in plastic by Vaughn Stubbs. Barbie's success, states Stubbs without irony, was a result of her accessories, which he depicted in a chatelaine featuring many styles of tiny plastic boots.

Using plastic as a component of high science and technology, Douglas Bucci, a diabetic himself, honored two pioneering diabetes researchers with a plastic syringe kit. Similarly, Stanley Lechtzin and Daniella Kerner used Computer Aided Design (CAD) and industrial materials to create an intricately structured web-like belt for Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of the World Wide Web.

Nature stirred at least three artists. German–born Georg Dobler honored the renowned botanical photographer Karl Blossfeldt, who manipulated plants to create highly stylized compositions used to teach natural forms. "In my nature jewelry," said Dobler, who hung a chain with floral forms and faceted stones, "I follow Blossfeldt's lead. I collect plants that please me formally, dry them, and cast them in silver or gold, often adding gemstones." American artist Marilyn Da Silva's highly evocative double chatelaine for John James Audubon, mounted with boblinks, red maple seedlings, and a small watercolor set, in a sense honors her own interest in birds, "an integral part of my work since 1999." And Terhi Tolvanen of Finland discussed the "profound influence" Claude Monet's "Waterlilies" series of paintings had on his life, when he realized how Monet had in fact created the water garden so that he could paint it. "This fine line – the human intervention in nature," said Tolvanen, "is a theme that I have worked with for most of my professional career."

Reading the catalogue for *Challenging the Chatelaine!* gives one the rare opportunity to reflect on such revealing statements, which, when paired with their unlikely and vastly disparate objects, offer true insight into concerns and creative proclivities of artists everywhere.

Andrea DiNoto is a New York–based writer who specializes in art and design.

above left
Georg Dobler's chatelaine devoted to botanical photographer Karl Blossfeldt.

above right
Vaughn Stubbs's chatelaine for Ruth Handler, inventor of Barbie.

INTERVIEW

by Suzanne Ramljak

Paul J. Smith

Paul J. Smith, Director Emeritus of the American Craft Museum, has been involved with the craft and design field for more than 50 years. A native of upstate New York, Smith attended the Art Institute of Buffalo and the School for American Craftsmen in Rochester, New York, where he studied painting, metalwork, and other crafts. He joined the staff of the American Craftsmen's Council (now the American Craft Council) in 1957, and was appointed director of their museum in 1963. In September 1987, after 30 years with the ACC, he left to develop an independent consulting service to the field. His many curatorial projects include: "Designed for Production: The Craftsmen's Approach" (1964); "Objects USA" (1969); "Craft Today: Poetry of the Physical" (1986); and "Objects for Use: Handmade by Design" (2001). Smith is the author of numerous publications, and is also a well known lecturer, juror, and consultant on craft and design issues worldwide.

Suzanne Ramljak: It has been 50 years since you joined the American Craft Council, and it's a good opportunity to survey the field over the past half century. What was the climate for craft production when you began? What were the burning issues of the day?

Paul Smith: I tend to be a person who looks forward, rather than back. Tomorrow is always more interesting to me. But, it was clearly a very different era. First of all, there was not the vast national network that exists today. There were pockets of activity all over the country; organizations like the Southern Highland Craft Guild and League of New Hampshire Craftsmen were conducting excellent programs. And traditional craft was still being practiced, such as basket making and quilt making. But the real central area of energy in 1957, when I came to ACC, was the academy. Art schools and university art departments had expanded enormously after WWII, as a result of the GI Bill and returning servicemen going to school, and that whole educational thrust was in high gear in the mid-1950s. The faculty was exploring along with their students, and there was a lot of energy and competition to do new work. There was also the very important element of sharing. The minute someone discovered a new technique or process, they made it available to others. Many lost techniques were being recovered, such as the revival of gold granulation by John Paul Miller, who did a film on the process to share his findings. There was a pioneering spirit, and everyone was just excited about what they were doing.

SR: What was the market like for craft at that time?

PS: While there was some form of market then, it was very small. Craft fairs were one source of income for a few craftspeople. There were almost no galleries. Collecting as we know it today did not exist. People acquired work because they enjoyed it, not to build a focused collection. In terms of metalwork in the 1950s, you had the Village Jewelers in New York City—Art Smith, Ed Wiener, Sam Kramer—who had their little galleries on West 8th and 4th Streets. They were selling very well and this was in itself an important historical episode. But overall the venues for selling work were nothing compared to today.

SR: What factors led to the change in the market for craft? What spurred people to start desiring such objects?

PS: Once you entered the 1960s, craft activity accelerated, and it paralleled the cultural explosion of that period. There was a sense that everything was possible, with freedom and experimentation in all areas. All the arts benefited from that. Then in the late 1960s the Johnson Wax Company sponsored "Objects USA," a major collection of contemporary craft. A traveling exhibition of the collection was conceived by Lee Nordness, who had a gallery in New York, and I served as guest curator. That show premiered at the Smithsonian National Collection of Fine Arts in 1969, and it illustrated what was happening in the field. It had a real impact, because it was such a large exhibition of major works that traveled

above
Paul J. Smith, 2007
Photo: Suzanne Ramljak

to prime art museums around the country and then to Europe. There was also a book and a one-hour network film shown on ABC. So it generated a lot of attention and excitement. People seeing it didn't realize that such work was even being produced. I know from conversations that the show definitely motivated galleries to open and serious collecting to emerge. While the school was the major patron and dominating force in the 1950s and '60s, by the mid-1970s the pendulum began to swing toward market dominance, where it remains today. It is a motivating influence, both good and bad. The result is that individuals today can earn their living and do quite well selling their work, independent from teaching jobs.

While the school was the major patron and dominating force in the 1950s and '60s, by the mid-1970s the pendulum began to swing toward market dominance, where it remains today.

SR: If the marketplace has replaced the academy as the arena of success, it becomes even more crucial that artists are equipped to survive in the real world. I know that you have concerns about whether schools are properly preparing students for economic viability.

PS: I applaud the good things happening in art education, but my observation is that most of the focus is on individual expression and unique works of art. This is a valid focus, but not everyone is going to be an accomplished sculptor or artist. Some have other interests. And they are not given as much choice or career training as they could be. Take the example of designing for industry, or even limited production. The opportunities to hand make design prototypes for home furnishing companies are rare in this country, and limited production design is a big area of potential. Or if a student wants to be a production jeweler or create work for architecture, there is very little curriculum or training available. Schools are in the pivotal position to open some doors and to train people. And within the schools themselves, there is the potential to blend some departments. Industrial design departments are segregated from art departments, and they seldom connect with each other. One does not see a lot of new ideas coming out of either. I've never been directly involved with academia, but I guess I'm bit of a frustrated dean. What you really need is a marriage broker, because the schools can't forge open career paths by themselves, and manufacturers find it easier to copy or go abroad for ideas than to invest in design programs. Such mergers between industry and artists have not taken off in this country as in Europe.

SR: There is greater urgency now given the current design boom and huge public appetite for unique objects. Many of the smartest and most innovative makers remain invisible to the consumer market. It would be a shame if this wave washes over and leaves the most talented work behind.

PS: This has long been a concern of mine, almost an obsession. In 1964 I organized an exhibition called "Designed for Production: A Craftsman's Approach." It was to show craftspeople who were designing for industry, such as textile artist Dorothy Liebes and metalsmith Jack Prip for Reed & Barton. A special issue of *Craft Horizons* came out on the subject. I've initiated many exhibitions with design content—"Made with Paper," "For the Tabletop," "Plastic as Plastic"—to report what is going on but also with the high intention of stimulating thinking about production possibilities in a specific genre. While they were popular exhibitions, they failed to generate or nurture a lot of new concepts. It is hard to analyze what the block is.

Related to this is the fact that craft fairs are shrinking today. Why? Because you can buy just so many of the same thing. There is not enough new merchandise. If the craft fairs are to grow then they need to expand design thinking to develop new products. People are copying each other, and it's a vicious circle. So much of it is simply boring. I walked the whole ACC show in Baltimore in a few hours this year and, while there was some very good work, especially jewelry, I was disappointed in a lot of what was featured.

SR: When in the past few decades did you begin to detect a discomfort with the word "craft?" When did it start to become an issue?

PS: It's always been an issue. I happen to defend the words "craft" and "craftsmanship." I think they are valid and meaningful. There are some people who hate the term, and think it is a dirty word. And there are others who love it. It is partly a vocabulary problem; the very nature of the creative process is change. What was made today is different tomorrow, so if you have a vocabulary that identifies something one day that may not apply the next, or it may have a new meaning. An example would be the Museum of

Modern Art. If it opened today as a fresh institution I doubt it would call itself the museum of "modern" art. "Modern" is a very dated word. So there is always this struggle going on between the word and the work. Some people are very proud to call themselves craftsmen, because they are so secure in what they are doing. This question of terminology often obsesses people who are insecure in their own work. Generally good artists know who they are, and are less concerned as to how their work is identified.

SR: You've said: "The words craft and craftsmanship have important meaning in the 21st century." Can you elaborate on that?

PS: What we identify as craft has been around since the beginning of civilization, and it is alive and well today. I think there is a basic human instinct to work with one's hands and to create. It is something I personally know is very rewarding. On the receiving end, as our world becomes more commercial, look-alike, and dehumanized, we seek more individual objects. I believe that quality, one-of-a-kind, handmade objects that have something personal about them will be in even greater demand in the future. This is all the more reason that I have enjoyed my association with the field and have dedicated my life to helping nurture it.

SR: Are you dismayed by those who turn their back on craft in favor of other fields?

PS: I want to address the homogenization that is taking place today in the marketplace and academy. Organizations and schools are getting rid of the word "craft," many artists are working in all media, and there are no longer any specialties. I hold that giving focus to a specialized area of the arts is important. If potters and blacksmiths are homogenized into the general category of art, they can be lost. Something comes from the intense involvement with a material or process. When a painter or sculptor works in clay once or twice, they don't get the same result as someone who has devoted their whole life to the material and creates work out of an intimate knowledge of its properties. I defend attention to craft as a specialized area of the arts in the broadest sense. Not as a way of isolating it, but in order to strengthen it.

SR: Which of your many projects are you most proud of?

PS: In 1986, I curated "Craft Today: Poetry of the Physical" for the opening of the new 53rd Street museum space. An adapted version of that exhibition, "Craft Today USA," then toured Europe under the auspices of United States Information Agency. I had the luxury of traveling with the show. It was really exciting to observe the public and press reaction to this material, especially in Eastern Bloc countries. They were just overwhelmed by the work. I'm still hearing responses today. It was greatly satisfying to see a fresh audience respond so strongly to the work we had become quite accustomed to. That was very personally rewarding.

I believe that quality, one-of-a-kind, handmade objects that have something personal about them will be in even greater demand in the future.

SR: What would be your advice to craftspeople? Do you have a slogan you want to share with practitioners in the field?

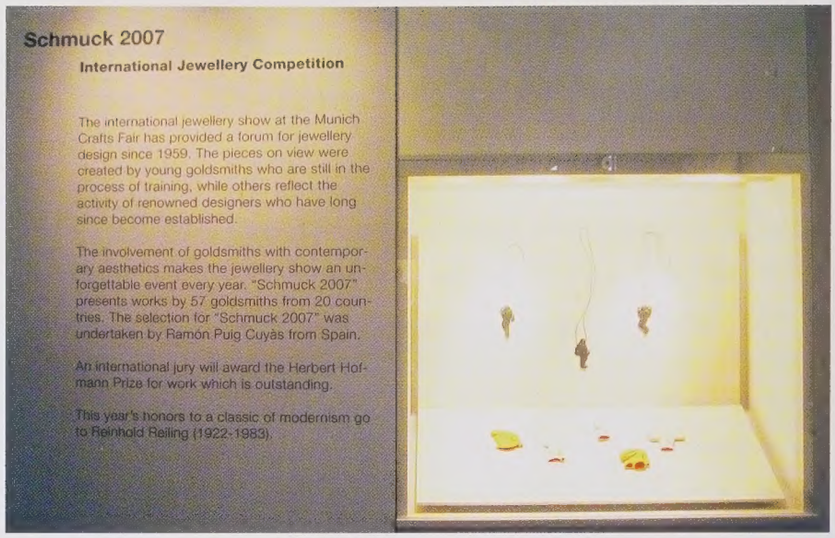
PS: Believe in your instincts. We are bombarded with so much information today through technology. It is very hard to step back and say: "I am me" and "This is my choice." Or to ask: What do I want to do? What interests me? What would I enjoy being part of? That is especially hard for young people, who are always seeking advice and expecting to be told what to do rather than realizing that it is their own responsibility to motivate themselves. It is their life and their path that they have to model. Reflecting on my own case, I never expected to be a museum director. But I happen to have an insatiable appetite for looking and seeing. I like to visit artists' studios and see their gallery exhibitions. I go to every possible show, from the Armory Show to the Asian Show to the New York Gift show. It keeps me informed and I get a perspective on what is happening. I think such exposure is crucial. It helps you clarify where you are at in the cultural context. While there is the danger of seeing too much, by looking at all aspects of your environment, you come away with something that interests and inspires you, something you can identify with, and want to be part of. This will not happen if you work in isolation. So my advice would be, see the world and trust your instincts.

Suzanne Ramljak is editor of *Metalsmith*.

Paul J. Smith and jeweler Arline Fisch, 1973, during "Objects USA" exhibition tour at Edinburgh Festival.

DOSSIER

by Ursula Neuman


Schmuck 2007
International Jewellery Competition
The international jewellery show at the Munich Crafts Fair has provided a forum for jewellery design since 1959. The pieces on view were created by young goldsmiths who are still in the process of training, while others reflect the activity of renowned designers who have long since become established.
The involvement of goldsmiths with contemporary aesthetics makes the jewellery show an unforgettable event every year. "Schmuck 2007" presents works by 57 goldsmiths from 20 countries. The selection for "Schmuck 2007" was undertaken by Ramón Puig Cuyàs from Spain.
An international jury will award the Herbert Hoffmann Prize for work which is outstanding.
This year's honors to a classic of modernism go to Reinhold Reiling (1922-1983).

Munich, Germany

In what is no less than an annual rite of spring, contemporary jewelry aficionados are drawn to Munich in mid-March for the international jewelry event known simply as "Schmuck," the German word for jewelry. Each year, this historic and artistic city is enthralled by jewelry during a scintillating week when museum and gallery openings, lectures, and other events draw artists, collectors, curators, dealers, and students from all corners of the globe. The central event is the juried exhibition of established and emerging jewelry artists that is a key part of the International Crafts Fair, which drew more than 175,000 visitors in six days this year.

Munich's position as a hotbed for contemporary jewelry is built upon its celebrated goldsmith traditions, which were furthered over the centuries by powerful and enlightened Bavarian royal patrons, notably the Wittelsbach family. In the mid-nineteenth century, the city's proud artistic heritage was advanced by newly founded arts and crafts associations, so that by the start of the twentieth century, Munich was Europe's most important cultural center, after Paris.

Following the Second World War, Munich sought to revive its distinguished art traditions through progressive state sponsorship and through the generous support of a new class of local patrons typified by the Danner family and the foundation they established for the Bavarian arts and crafts. A humanist climate soon flourished again, which led to a reexamination of the role of contemporary jewelry in the postwar era. Under the spirited advocacy of art historian Herbert Hoffmann, Munich goldsmiths were among the first to champion the creation of one-of-a-kind pieces over industrially produced jewelry. In 1959, Hoffmann organized "Schmuck Szene" (Jewelry Scene), the first juried exhibition showcasing the recent accomplishments of established and emerging jewelry artists.

Today, "Schmuck" is organized by the Munich Handwerkskammer under the directorship of Wolfgang Loesche, and has become widely recognized as the ultimate guide to cutting-edge studio jewelry. This year, "Schmuck" elicited more than 400 submissions from artists in 36 countries, from which the guest curator, noted Spanish jeweler Ramón Puig Cuyàs, chose 57 participants from 20 nations.

The highlight each year is the awards ceremony, during which three artists are announced as winners of the Herbert Hoffmann prize and bestowed with medals designed by Hermann Jünger, the most influential German jeweler of the postwar era. The 2007 winners were German artists Karl Fritsch and Christiane Förster, and Dutch artist Iris Nieuwenburg. The prestigious Bavarian State Prize went to Karl Fritsch, as well. The judges also name one jeweler the *Klassiker der Moderne* ("Modern Master") for long-term contributions to the field; this year's winner was posthumously awarded to the legendary Pforzheim goldsmith Reinhold Reiling (1922–83).

The "Schmuck" awards ceremony is traditionally followed by lectures presented by distinguished contemporary jewelry experts. This year's speakers were the director of the Pforzheim Schmuckmuseum, Cornelie Holzach, and Spanish jewelry historian Monica Gaspar. The social highlight of the week is the annual Goldsmith's Dinner (*Goldschmiedetreffen*) at the Augustiner, one of Munich's fabled Brauhauses. Everyone is seated at long communal wooden tables, and the hall is full of *Gemütlichkeit*, as beer flows and copious helpings of sausage and schnitzel are devoured.

The busy week of "Schmuck" events was capped with a lecture by Helen Williams Drutt English, American doyenne of art jewelry, recounting her early years of collecting and her efforts to expand the public's appreciation for this new art through her Philadelphia gallery. The Pinakothek der Moderne's large auditorium was packed to capacity, and the enthusiastic audience gave her a well-deserved standing ovation in recognition of her contributions to international jewelry and the many careers she has fostered.

Munich boasts a permanent community of jewelry artists, who help to keep the city at the center of a true global village year-

Display in the "Schmuck 2007" exhibition at the International Crafts Fair, Munich

round. Many of these artists came originally to study at the renowned Munich Academy (Akademie der Bildenden Künste). Founded in 1808 and preparing to celebrate its bicentennial next year, the school offers students from all over the world a demanding but expansive seven-year course of study. The jewelry program is headed by the influential Swiss-born jeweler Otto Künzli, who succeeded the legendary Hermann Jünger as director in 1991. Künzli has held teaching positions in Europe, Asia, and America, and his energetic encouragement of the school's student exchange program has helped to position Munich at the center of an international network of contemporary jewelry artists.

For those who want to see the finest jewelry of the last five decades, the first stop in Munich has to be the stunning Danner Rotunde, which opened at the Pinakothek der Moderne in 2004. This superb collection starts with the work of the international avant-garde of the 1960s and chronicles the evolution of the field up to the experimental jewelry of the present day. This year, the Pinakothek's exhibition and public events program included a retrospective of the work of the renowned Dutch designer Gijs Bakker, handsomely installed by his son Aldo. Not far away, some of Bakker's major works were on view at an exhibition presented by the Galerie Stühler (Berlin) at the Winterberg Kunst Gallery.

Another Munich mecca for the jewelry aficionado is the stylish flagship store and gallery of the Bayerischer Kunstgewerbe-Verein (established in 1851), in the center of the city. The association's main task is to promote Bavarian arts and crafts at prestigious fairs both within and outside of Germany, and its 400 members work in jewelry, holloware, glass, ceramics, textile, wood, and paper. Each spring, the gallery hosts an exciting jewelry exhibition during *Schmuck* week. This year's, "First we Quake now we Shake," featured an iconoclastic group of artists—Teru Akatsu, Volker Atrops, Ela Bauer, Karl Fritsch, Manon van Kouswijk, Karin Seufert, and Norman Weber—who first met 10 years ago as exchange students in Tokyo. While in Japan, they made discoveries that turned some of jewelry's long-held assumptions upside down and enriched the jewelry world as a whole. The Kunstgewerbe-Verein also presented Mari Ishikawa's new delicate brooches and rings. Titled "In the Shade of the Tree," the series combines photography with finely wrought aluminum or oxidized silver to document the cycles of nature.

Munich has many excellent private galleries whose owners maintain high standards for studio jewelry. One such example, Galerie Spektrum, owned by jewelry artists Marianne Schliwinski and Jürgen Eickhoff (her husband), has been presenting international talent since 1981. Their March exhibition featured Ms. Schliwinski's "Icons of the 20th Century," a series of glass brooches populated by pop icons, preserved under glass cloches around a circular table. The gallery also hosted Dutch artist Ted Noten's book signing of his monograph *CH2*, providing his many admirers an opportunity to obtain the luxury edition with its removable paper pendant.

Galerie Biro, owned by the energetic Hungarian-born Olga Zobel, was packed to overflowing with visitors to its exhibition "Opposition is True Friendship." Major works were gathered from the gallery's fine group of international artists, who came to the rescue following a last-minute show cancellation. In addition, the jewel-like interior of Galerie Isabella Hund, whose owner is a jewelry artist herself, provided an advantageous setting for the recent work of Germany's Sabine Klarner.

At the artists' cooperative Görres 10, three young German jewelers, Jantje Fleischhut, Jeannette Jansen, and Constanze Schreiber, were joined by Swiss-born Natalie Luder and Austrian Ulrich Reithofer in a show of their works entitled "Fünf" (Five),

Display in the "Schmuck 2007" exhibition at the International Crafts Fair, Munich

The Danner Rotunde jewelry gallery at Munich's Pinakothek der Moderne

Detail of installation of "Permission to Grow Up" exhibition at the alternative space, Kultur im Keller

inventively displayed on stacked milk crates. Luder's neckpiece made from 125 rabbits' teeth caused quite a sensation. Reminiscent of the stag-teeth pins that were part of nineteenth-century hunting jewelry, the neckpiece starred this past summer at an alfresco breakfast on the edge of a forest, at which 125 wild rabbits were served.

Across Munich's famous Isar River, Gallery Ventil presented a dual exhibition of Alexandra Bahlmann's exquisite new neckpieces of small precious stones and pearls in unusual color combinations, and Munich-born RISD professor Barbara Seidenrath's finely conceived, etched, and printed enameled pieces, whose motifs are inspired by German romanticism and the painter Caspar David Friedrich in particular. Ventil is a workshop-gallery owned by jewelry artists and painters Doris Sacher and Hans Gericke, whose work was on view as well.

At Henriette Schuster's intimate gallery at Rothmundstrasse, a talented German-Australian group presented a diverse assortment of dynamic works. Lisa Walker, Karl Fritsch, Helen Britton, Henriette Schuster, Voker Atrops, and Suska Mackert are some of the most innovative voices in jewelry. Mackert, for example, is expanding from jewelry into other media, including video and installation art.

In the studio he shares with Japanese artist Mari Ishikawa, Hoffmann prize winner Karl Fritsch presented a second series of work together with Caroline von Steinau-Steinrueck. Among Von Steinrueck's newest work was a series of refined gold armlets with flower-inspired photographic images that were subtle and poetic, yet unsentimental.

A special treat was a small exhibition entitled "The Poetics of the Everyday," featuring metalsmiths' works at the Alte Kunstgiesserei Schwabing. The exhibition celebrated the ordinary through kettles, bowls, cups, cutlery, and tools by young artists studying in Great Britain: Wiebke Meurer, Asatao Kamiyama, Catherine Miles, Chien-Wei Chang, Ji-Hyun Yoo, Vladimir Böhm and David Clarke. The pieces, some little more than metaphors for real objects, were displayed on well-worn workbenches in a nineteenth-century metal casting studio located in one of Munich's increasingly rare, but utterly charming, backyard artisans' workshops.

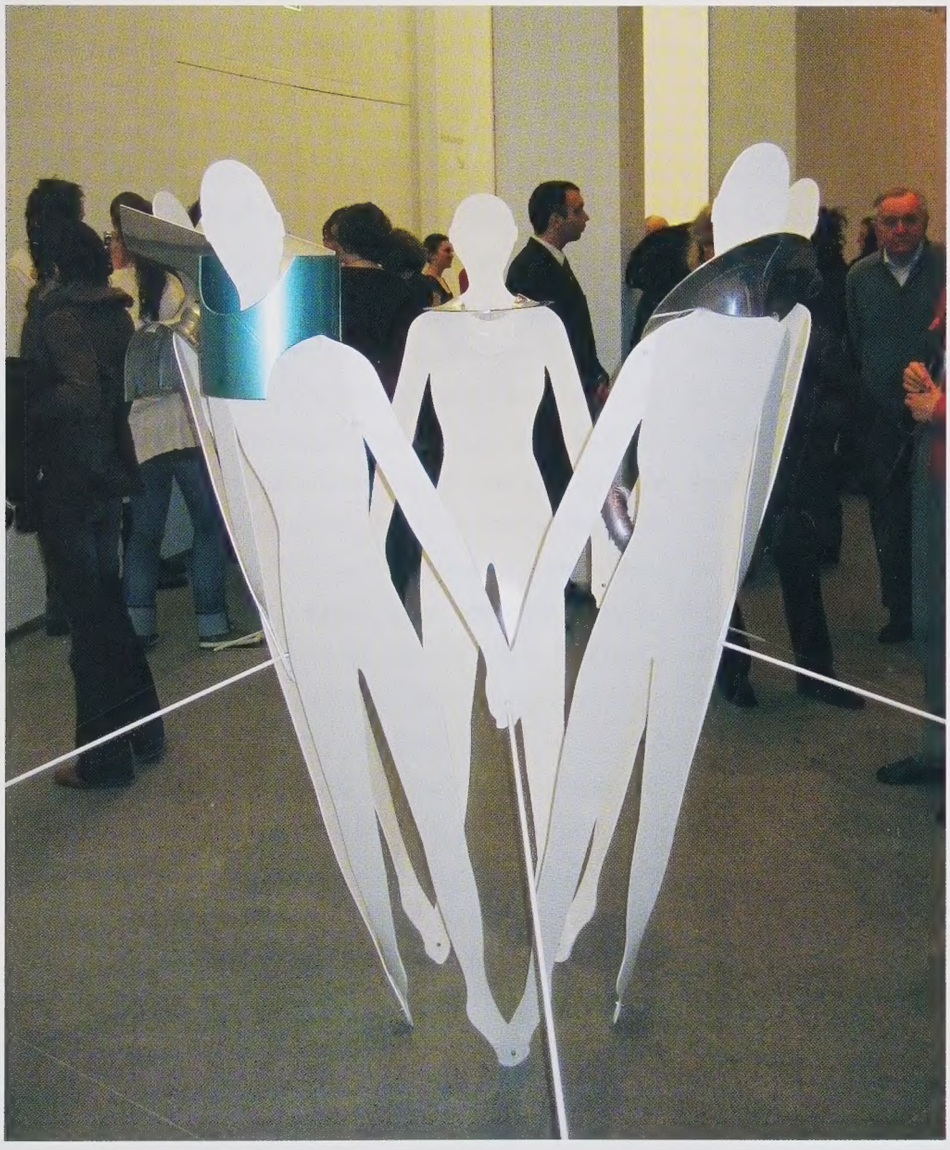
The talk of the town, without a doubt, was an exhibition titled "Permission to Grow Up," an imaginative installation at the alternative space Kultur im Keller. Supported by the Cultural Department of Estonia, the exhibition presented works by the F.F.F.F. group, consisting of the young Estonian female artists Ketli Tiitsar, Kristi Paap, Marina Valdma, and Kaire Rannikk, who have been working together since their graduation in 1996 from the Metal Art Department of the Estonian Academy of Arts in Tallinn. Forty-two pieces of jewelry, most in nontraditional materials inspired by childhood photographs of the four artists, were intriguingly fixed to nursery school towels, simply hung, as if to dry, over wooden clothes hangers, as might have been the custom in Tallinn's nursery schools in the 1970s and '80s. The photograph that had inspired each piece of jewelry was attached at the bottom of the towel. The artists were attempting to capture time and make peace with events and people of their past.

As contemporary studio jewelry asserts its distinct voice within the art world, it sheds the trappings of the display case and expresses itself as installation art, an increasingly important option for communicating ideas.

As contemporary studio jewelry asserts its distinct voice within the art world, it sheds the trappings of the display case and expresses itself as installation art, an increasingly important option for communicating ideas. The display of contemporary jewelry on black velvet inside locked vitrines with didactic labels is clearly dated, and I hope that alternatives will be presented more often. Museums take note: it is time to devise a security system that allows for innovative presentations.

And if all of this takes place in Munich in one week in March, what happens the rest of the year? Be assured that you can find exciting jewelry on view in the city's many galleries and museums anytime. If you find the right café, you can be immersed in the active and often heated discussions as artists and friends share their common passion for art jewelry. It is no wonder that this atmosphere encourages the highly trained Munich jewelers to take risks and develop a distinct personality for their work. There are many reasons to visit this beautiful city of great art and the good life, but if jewelry is your passion, Munich invites you to indulge yourself.

Ursula Neuman is the newly appointed curator of contemporary jewelry at the Museum of Arts and Design, New York.



clockwise from above left
Galerie Brio owner Olga Zobel addresses guests on opening night of the exhibition "Opposition is True Friendship"

"Fünf" (Five) exhibition opening at Munich's artist cooperative Görres 10, with jewelry displayed on stacked plastic crates

Installation at the jewelry retrospective of Dutch designer Gijs Bakker in the Pinakothek der Moderne

POSSESSED

by Cindi Strauss

In Jewelry's Grip at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

In late 1997, as a newly minted assistant curator for decorative arts, just two years out of the Cooper-Hewitt's graduate program, I was presented with the opportunity of a lifetime: to develop a long-range plan for collecting twentieth- and twenty-first-century decorative arts and design at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. The MFAH had earned a fine reputation among American museums for its collection of historical decorative arts and the groundbreaking exhibitions conceived from those holdings. Yet little attention had been paid to acquiring objects made in the past 100 years. That is not to say that the MFAH's collection included no examples of twentieth-century decorative arts and design; what it lacked was a shape and an identity.

Developing a collection brings to mind the proverbial kid in a candy store. One wants everything, but quickly realizes that one's appetite is larger than one's stomach or purse. Establishing a program at this late date meant that certain objects were simply out of reach. Nonetheless, I resolved to create a collection in all media that would tell the story of international modern and contemporary decorative arts, craft, and design. It would include both the recognized icons of established masters and the fresh work of emerging artists. Most of all, I set out to create a singular identity for the MFAH's collection. I did not want to build the same collection as every other museum in America.

By 2002, the MFAH decorative arts department had devoted five years to rapidly acquiring work and exhibiting the fruit of its labors. The museum obtained important examples of 1920s and 1930s American industrial design, mid-century modern, Scandinavian design, and international design from 1990 to the present. Studio glass and ceramics became new focuses, and an outstanding fiber collection was promised as a gift to the museum. Craft had become a major priority and an area for which there was great community support. Contemporary craft posed an excellent opportunity: Few encyclopedic art museums of the MFAH's size were making a significant commitment to craft. The MFAH could distinguish itself in this area by building a world-class collection, and, by exhibiting it alongside painting, sculpture, photography, prints, drawings, and other media, craft could be viewed in its rightful artistic context.

A fortuitous meeting with Helen Williams Drutt English in Houston that year allowed the MFAH to address a substantial shortcoming in its craft collection: the absence of artist-made jewelry. The story of the Drutt Collection coming to the MFAH is well known, but its impact on the museum's collection is less so. Prior to the Drutt acquisition, the decorative arts collection had one piece of jewelry in its holdings: a stunning 1948 Art Smith neckpiece. At the time, I knew nothing about studio jewelry, nor did anyone else in the curatorial staff. Our library had few books on the subject, and had only very recent subscriptions to magazines such as *Metalsmith* and *Ornament*. But I was mesmerized by the Drutt Collection, as were my colleagues in the various departments that collected modern and contemporary art. Perhaps most importantly,

Installation view of "Beyond Ornament: Contemporary Jewelry from the Helen Williams Drutt Collection," MFA, Houston, August 16, 2003–February 29, 2004

MFAH Director Peter Marzio was smitten with what he saw as a visual index to the major artistic, cultural, and intellectual movements of the twentieth century.

From the first months of having the Drutt collection at the MFAH, I was possessed, and began to see connections everywhere; a trip to see the "Zero to Infinity: Arte Povera 1962–1972" exhibition at the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, D.C., in late 2002 made me wonder about jewelry's connection to this dynamic movement. In the galleries that featured the Hirshhorn's permanent collection, a 1929 construction by César Domela immediately brought to mind Marta Breis's *Brooch* (1989), and a Donald Judd sculpture made me think of Gary Griffin's *Collar in Progressive Base .1875 and .3125* (1976). Were these just stylistic connections that an untrained mind was seeing, or were there deeper relationships between these objects? I was determined to find out. And, with 626 pieces of jewelry dating from 1963 to the present suddenly under my purview, I had a lot to learn.

Did Gaetano Pesce look toward traditions of lacquer in creating his phantasmagorical resin vessels and furniture, the way that Peter Chang did with his jewelry? Exactly how much of a relationship is there between Albert Paley's jewelry and furniture and the intellectual tenets of the Art Nouveau movement? Thomas Gentille was an avid student of traditional Japanese eggshell lacquer, but did the use of this technique by French Art Deco artists and designers such as Jean Dunand affect his own aesthetic and technical choices?

As a curator, my job is to place objects in context. The beauty of this mandate is that context constantly changes. Scholarship, the discovery of an artist, dramatic shifts in technology, or setting seemingly disparate objects in relationship to one another can alter context and introduce new ways of seeing. Long-held beliefs are challenged, debated, and perhaps even overturned. My time with contemporary jewelry, while far from over, has altered my personal and professional landscape in ways that I am just beginning to understand. It has, I am proud to say, made me a better curator.

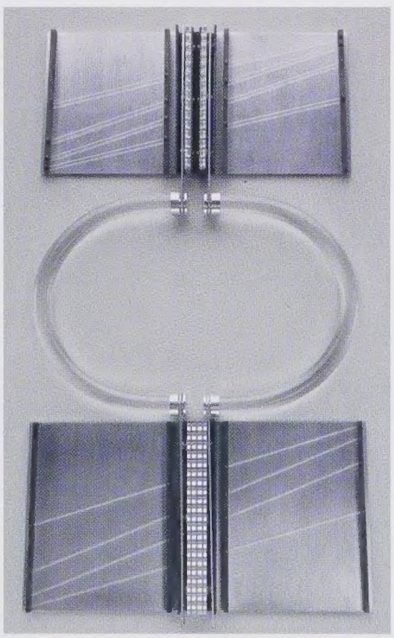
Scholarship, the discovery of an artist, dramatic shifts in technology, or placing seemingly disparate objects in relationship to one another can alter context and introduce new ways of seeing.

The last five years of my life have been devoted largely to research on contemporary jewelry. Dedicating so much time and energy to in-depth research is a rare luxury even for a curator. Helen Drutt was a great guide; she generously shared her vast reserves of knowledge, and her archive and library with me, and in turn, helped the MFAH build its own library. The artists, too, were remarkable. I contacted every living artist in the collection that I could locate and began a dialogue about their work. Technical, aesthetic, and philosophical choices were recorded on custom-designed forms for each object in the collection. Many of the artists also consented to oral interviews. Slowly, the contours of the field and the contributions of its artists revealed themselves.

The ramifications of this total immersion have been more far-reaching than I ever could have predicted. My time with jewelry has literally changed the way I look at decorative arts and design and, in a broader sense, at art itself. My vocabulary has changed, as has the way that I approach objects. The questions of concept and function, scale, the relationship of form to the body, and the choices regarding techniques and materials that are central to understanding contemporary jewelry are now part of any query I make to contemporary designers about the objects they produce. These moments of great learning have possessed me, and often have led me to the most satisfying experiences of my profession.

Cindi Strauss is curator of Modern and Contemporary Decorative Arts and Design at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

The exhibition "Ornament as Art: Avant-Garde Jewelry from the Helen Williams Drutt Collection," begins its national tour September 30, 2007-January 21, 2008 at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and then travels to the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum; the Mint Museum of Craft + Design, Charlotte, North Carolina; and the Tacoma Art Museum, Tacoma, Washington.



Gary S. Griffin
Collar in Progressive Base .1875 and .3125, 1976
aluminum, brass, acrylic, nylon
15 3/8 x 9 1/4"
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Helen Williams Drutt Collection, gift of Jeffrey A. Shankman

Crossover

Jewelry by Painters, Sculptors, and Architects

by Andrea DiNoto

The creation of jewelry has long attracted artists otherwise engaged in painting and sculpture, and even design and architecture. The ideas put forth by these "crossovers," from every major Modernist movement, from Surrealism to neo-Pop and beyond, have richly cross fertilized the cutting-edge art jewelry world, where, now more than ever, the surreal, the conceptual, the minimalist—you name it—trumps the purely decorative. Several stellar pieces of early crossover jewelry were on view last spring in London, at the exhibition "Surreal Things" at the V&A Museum[1], notably Salvador Dalí's dazzling, bejeweled *Etoile de Mer* (Starfish) brooch made in 1950 for his patron Rebekah Harkness, who wore it —like a tentacled hand—clasping her breast.[2] Rarely seen, along with Dalí's more familiar *Ruby Lips* brooch and his other iconic jewels, the starfish was one of the more stunning pieces in the show, which, according to its curator Ghislane Wood, is the first to link Surrealism and the decorative arts.[3] Dalí is one of jewelry's great crossover artists. Like many other twentieth-century Modernists, his pieces function fully as an extension of his hallucinatory art, which encompassed painting, sculpture, stage design, and more.

Salvador Dalí
Etoile de mer (Starfish) brooch, 1950
gold, diamonds, rubies, emeralds, pearl
© Salvador Dalí, Gala-Salvador Dalí Foundation, DACS, London 2006

The crossover phenomenon dates to the postwar era, when artists, notably the Italian sculptors, brothers Gio and Arnoldo Pomodoro, began creating modernist abstract designs in bas-relief gold as adjuncts/complements to their work in sculpture. Their aim was to supplement their incomes; many artists of the time made lucrative excursions into ceramics and other crafts. The Pomodoros, who, unlike the typical crossover, also happened to be skilled goldsmiths, demonstrated *par excellence* the artistic potential of studio jewelry broken free of classical styling. In the same period, Alexander Calder, through his fanciful wire and brass ornaments based either on primitive art or pure fantasy—more than 1,500 pieces made for family and friends—validated the mixing of precious with non-precious metals and incorporating found objects in jewelry.

Gary Hume
Polar Bear, 2006
18k yellow gold pendant, mixed media display stand
16 x 12 x 12"
Copyright Gary Hume,
courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery, New York

The first wave of crossovers reads like a roll call of Modernism's foremost practitioners: Giacometti (who made designs for Elsa Schiaparelli), Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Hans Arp, Man Ray, Yves Tanguy, Jean Cocteau, Lucio Fontana, Bruno Martinazzi, and more. All made jewelry, either out of playful curiosity (as with Picasso's "mask" brooches) or serious commitment, usually partnering with a craftsman or jeweler to fabricate their designs. One of the foremost crossover exemplars from this group was Georges Braque who, in 1963, at the ripe age of 81, produced more than 100 magnificent Modernist jewels based on themes from classical mythology. Working closely with the lapidary-jeweler Henri-Michel de Lowenfeld, Braque mixed gold and diamonds, with richly colored stones like jasper, turquoise, and rhodocrocite standing in for bright Cubist colors in a series of asymmetrical, multi-textured compositions featuring abstract bird forms.[4]

Working in the '50s and '60s, the Italian painter and sculptor Lucio Fontana, known for his slashed and pierced canvases and huge cleft ceramics pieces, was undoubtedly the first truly conceptual crossover artist, with many jewelry designs produced in gold. Fontana's *concetto spaziale* ("spatial concepts"), as most of his works were called, used the slash as "the minimum linguistic unit of gesture and form in the absence of material,"[5] but the brutality of the gesture, especially as applied to gold, is ironic—and still shockingly contemporary—as it mocks the material's intrinsic value and vaunted permanence, a presaging of a now-widespread conceit.

...abstracted and miniaturized architectural forms can work effectively on an intimate scale, affording the wearer new ways of relating to the built environment.

In the mid 1980s, Italian entrepreneur-patron Cleto Munari persuaded 16 prominent postmodernist architects to create jewels for his personal collection. The designs, more than 150 pieces, were executed by Italian goldsmiths, and the results, documented in Barbara Radice's book, *Jewelry by Architects*, demonstrate how abstracted and miniaturized architectural forms can work effectively on an intimate scale, affording the wearer new ways of relating to the built environment. Radice wrote that the collection "represents the debut of Postmodernism in the jewelry craft, or if you like, the first true figurative modernization of jewelry design as an applied art since the twenties and thirties."[6] Although it is difficult to assess

above
Richard Meier
Ring, 1984–1986
gold, white onyx, black onyx
Collection Cleto Munari, Italy

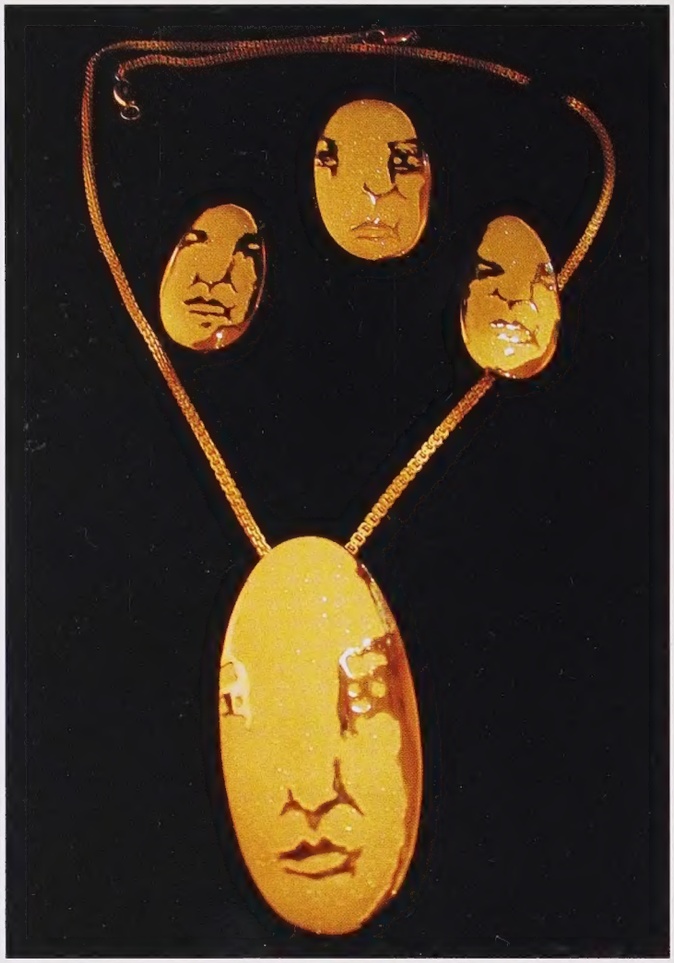
top
Gio Pomodoro
Brooch, 1963
18k gold, 18k white gold
1 15/16 x 2 1/16"
Collection Museum of Arts and Design, New York
Photo: Jeff Sturges

the direct impact of this specific collection—it was only briefly seen and publicized outside of design circles—it offered a new direction for jewelry, in which postmodern concepts of volume, plan, and historical reference were brought to bear. Architect Peter Eisenman seemed to speak on behalf of all the architects when he stated: "The jewelry is my architecture, no different from my architecture." His three-dimensional gold grid ring is inset with color blocks suggestive of a Miesian high-rise; Arata Isozaki's pendant, a flat gold grill overlaid with a square and semicircle of lapis and turquoise, is a floor plan for a building or water garden; and Richard Meier's minimalist, triple-banded black and white onyx ring, artfully fenestrated, might be the model for a new museum.

In sharp contrast to these bold, literal forms, the recent jewelry by superstar architect Frank Gehry for Tiffany & Co., fabricated in the store's workshops, is surprising for its delicacy, and the lack of bravura one would have expected from the creator of the Guggenheim museum in Bilbao, Spain, a monumental work of deconstructivist art in itself. Where Cleto Munari's collection—unconstrained by retail considerations—proclaims and celebrates architectural structure, mass, and detailing, Gehry's work goes mainstream via torque-shaped rings and links, wave pendants, and Brancusiesque fish forms sculpted in silver, rare woods, and semiprecious stones. Gehry's well-known fondness for the fish form has inspired his objects, monumental site-specific sculpture, and even an entire building. If his fish pendants and necklaces, so far the most successful of his Tiffany designs, demonstrate an uncharacteristic restraint, they also reflect the architect's concern with adaptation to "site," in this case the soft, luminous human (woman's) body. The one piece of exuberant Gehry architecture in the collection, a platinum and diamond brooch based on Bilbao's ground plan (special order; $1 million), manages to convey the building's eccentric energy, despite its Tiffanyesque refinement.

Eschewing dimensionality, a few contemporary graphic artists have taken an innovative approach to two-dimensional format in their crossover designs. The constellation series of silver pendants, minimally pierced with signs of the zodiac by renowned designer, graphic artist, and children's book author Bruno Munari, were included in the exhibition "Il Design della Gioia/Jewelry Between Design and Ornament," which was part of at the 2004–05 Milan Triennale. Munari's jewelry mirrors the concept behind his brilliant 1992 picture book *Flight of Fancy*, in which he improvised around a throw of 21 dots on a page to tell "all the stories in the world." As well, the pendants evoke Munari's philosophic statement: "The universe is a circle whose center is everywhere but whose circumference is nowhere."

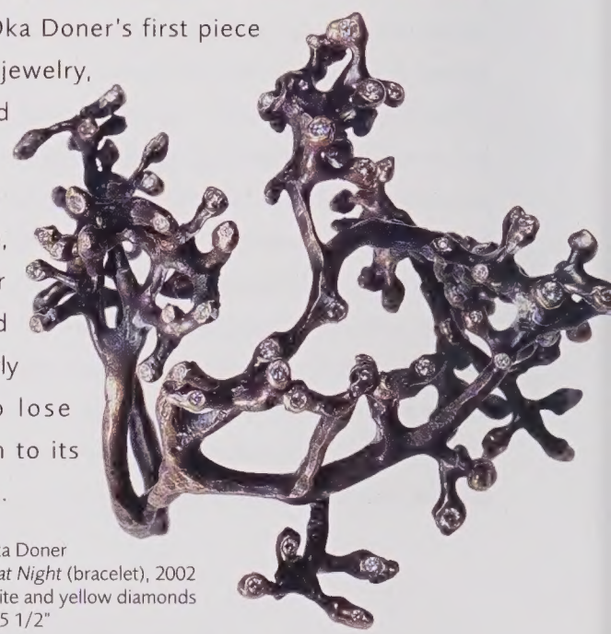
Frank Gehry
Fish Necklace, 2006
sterling silver
From the Frank Gehry Collection for Tiffany & Co.



Jan Sawka is a Polish-American multimedia artist and graphic designer well known in Europe for his anticommunist activism and poster art, including the famous 1981 design that was used by the AFL-CIO to raise funds for the Polish trade union Solidarity. In the mid-1990s, in Japan at the invitation of the Ministry of Culture, he met goldsmith Tadashi Takahashi, who persuaded Sawka to create drawings for jewelry prototypes. In 2004, Takahashi produced three Sawka designs, including *The Faces*, which is based on Polish grave portraits, generally photographs set in granite. Graphically reminiscent of the poster art of the '60s and '70s, as well as antique portrait medallions and even cameos, *The Faces* presents a haunting woman's visage as a photographic negative, with dark and light areas suggested by polished and matte gold surfaces.

The reflective surface is key in the work of neo-Pop British artist Gary Hume, who uses commercial gloss paint in bright colors on aluminum sheets. His flat, childlike animal shapes recall Andy Warhol's silkscreen flower paintings, Matisse's cutouts, or even cartoon characters run over by steamrollers. Hume has recently appropriated his rotund polar bear shape for a jewelry project—a hybrid work featuring a gold pendant on a chain. Conceived as a mini-installation, the gleaming necklace is mounted on a base made from a gallon-size paint can with artful drippings down the sides, and topped with a pom-pom of shredded plastic supermarket bags. Hume's polar bear pendant is at one with his painting—flat, highly reflective, almost mirror-like, so that the viewer completes the image.

Nature-based jewelry is nothing new, but Michele Oka Doner proves the exception to the rule. The multifaceted and widely celebrated designer, known for evocative table-top objects, vessels, tools, furniture, sculpture, and architectural installations (notably, the terrazzo floor of Miami International Airport, inlaid with bronze sea forms), approaches jewelry as she does all her work: by appropriating the detritus of the natural world—stems, leaves, bark, seed pods, fronds, branches—which she then models and casts to form everything from fire tongs to furniture to bracelets. Somewhat reminiscent of the work of French designer Claude Lalanne, who created electroformed botanical jewelry in the '60s and '70s, Oka Doner's unique pieces take the casting process to a new level of artful rendering. Both her 2002 *Coral Reef at Night* bracelet (based on a discarded grape stem) and her 2001 *Corsage* wrist ornament, resembling a seed pod, are cast in bronze and set with white and yellow diamonds, a startling juxtaposition of materials that manages to retain the essence of the organic original. In the foreword to Oka Doner's book *Natural Seduction*, Mitchell Wolfson Jr. wrote: "An art first inspired by objects lifted piecemeal from nature has become an art of objects created out of nature."[7] This seamless transformation is evident in Oka Doner's first piece of production jewelry, a palm frond choker for the French silver maker Christofle, remarkable for its delicacy and yet not so overly refined as to lose its connection to its botanical source.

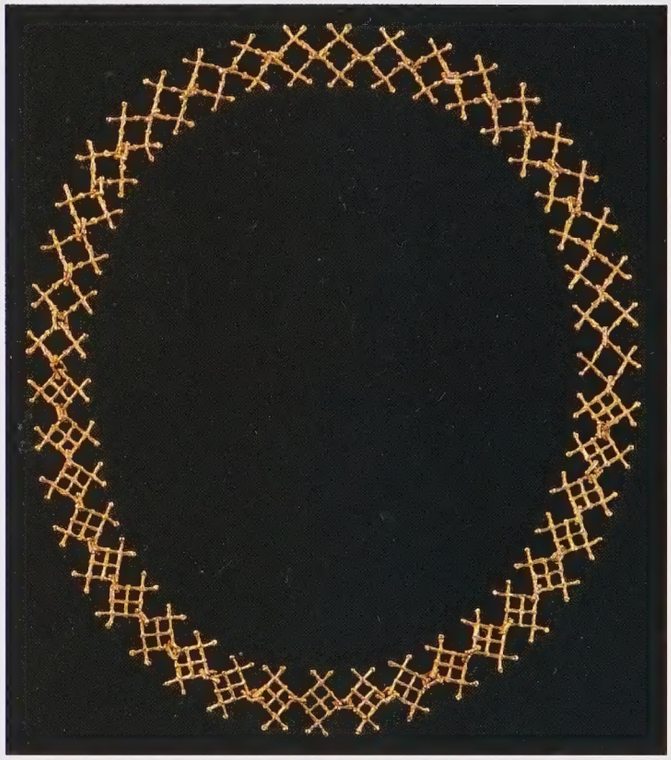


Jan Sawka
The Faces (necklace, ring, earrings), 2004
18k gold
fabrication by Tadashi Takahashi, Japan

Michele Oka Doner
Coral Reef at Night (bracelet), 2002
bronze, white and yellow diamonds
4 x 3 1/2 x 5 1/2"

Louise Bourgeois
Spider Brooch, 2005
gold
4 1/8 x 3 1/8 x 1"
edition of 6

Lucas Samaras
Necklace #52, 1996-98
22k gold



The casting process, which can so faithfully reproduce the most delicate and complex, the most minute and monumental forms, has long afforded a direct route to artistic alchemy. Contemporary artists Kiki Smith and Lucas Samaras, both known for their dedication to craft, have used casting to vastly different effect for unique excursions into jewelry. For 25 years, Smith has made evocative sculptural reproductions of body parts in polished bronze, terra cotta, glass, and plaster. For one limited-edition artwork, a collaboration with Richard Tuttle titled *Bouquet*, she cast the tip of her own tongue in 14-karat gold to make a stick pin that attaches to Tuttle's artfully mounted swath of nineteenth-century damask fabric.

The reclusive and unconventional Samaras, on the other hand, chose common quarter-inch grid chicken wire (also known as hardware cloth) as the basis for a collection of what turned out to be mythic-seeming works of 22-karat gold. His show "Gold," at the Pace Wildenstein gallery in New York in 1999, presented dozens of mesh-like pieces—chain-link necklaces, bracelets, and rings—that he'd fashioned using the lost-wax process on his chicken-wire models. Samaras first painted the wire to give it a rough surface, then had the pieces cast at a foundry.[8] Finally, they were chased and joined by a goldsmith, who also added stones. Thus, Samaras transformed a favorite hardware store material, from which he has famously constructed boxes and idiosyncratic sculptures, into jewelry resembling the excavated gold hoards of antiquity, and recalling, as Barbara Rose wrote in the show's catalog, "the artisanal origins of art."

But what of art that is concerned with performance, with musicality and theatrical effects, or almost exclusively with words or with viewer interaction?

Laurie Anderson
Hearring, 1997
earring with playable sound message (approx. 20 sec.)
brass, copper, circuit board, loudspeaker, lithium battery, Plexiglas, wires
approx. 3 3/8 x 1 3/4 x 1"
jewelry by Josiah Dearborn, engineering design Bob Bielecki, ed. 150, with signed and numbered certificate
© Parkett Publishers and Laurie Anderson

We expect just such transformative sleight-of-hand from visual artists; when they turn their minds to jewelry—whether by manipulation of scale or innovative use of materials, or both—we anticipate a compelling object that is an extension of their artistic preoccupation. If we are awed, say, by Louise Bourgeois's enormous, surreal spider sculptures, the donning of her gold spider brooch provides an almost talismanic connection to its source. But what of art that is concerned with performance, with musicality and theatrical effects, or almost exclusively with words or with viewer interaction? Contemporary artists in each of these areas have created

jewelry of remarkable originality, offered as limited-edition collector's items by the art magazine *Parkett*. The most innovative among them is Laurie Anderson's *Hearring*, a wearable audio device that features a 20-second recorded message of the pre-eminent performance artist's voice calling: "Hey, you. (pause) I'm right behind you. (pause) Hello. (pause) It's me."[9] In another version, she reads a story. The "truisms" that characterize Jenny Holzer's conceptual installation art are echoed in the inscribed snake ring she designed for *Parkett*, which bears one of the disturbing captions from her 1994 "Lustmord"[10] series: "With you inside me comes the knowledge of my death."

While the crossover artists in this discussion remain unknown to all but an elite art- and jewelry-loving cognoscenti, there's another crossover category entirely that has the world in its palm: celebrities, for whom jewelry represents a lucrative sideline, or a personal indulgence. The reigning queen of costume jewelry, comedian Joan Rivers, sells regularly on QVC and has published a coffee table book of her designs (out of print). And then there's singer Paula Abdul, who offers her inexpensive charms and trinkets to her fans online. Then of course, there's actor Brad Pitt who, with the Damiani company, famously designed the engagement solitaire and wedding bands[11] for his ill-fated marriage to...well, you know who. Reportedly something of an architecture and design buff, Pitt has inadvertently invented a new art form: crossover jewelry as ephemera. ◘

Andrea DiNoto is a New York–based writer who specializes in art and design.

1 "Surreal Things: Surrealism and Design," Victoria & Albert Museum, March 29–July 22, 2007, South Kensington, London.

2 To fully appreciate the surrealism of the starfish brooch, one should understand that starfish eat bivalves, like oysters and clams, by prying open the shell and pushing its stomach inside to digest the soft tissue. Thus, Dali's starfish, with its sensual undulating arms, has evidentially encountered an indigestible pearl, which remains as the magnificent jewel in the animal's crown.

3 Included are Meret Oppenheim's stork-legged metal table and her animal hair-over-gold bracelet, along with Dali's famous sofa modeled after the painted lips of Mae West.

4 Graham Hughes, *Modern Jewelry* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1963), p 223.

5 *Lucio Fontana*, eds. Enrico Crispolti, Rosella Siligato (Milan: Electa, 1998), p 249.

6 Barbara Radice, *Jewelry by Architects* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987), p 7.

7 *Michele Oka Doner: Natural Seduction*, essays by Suzanne Ramljak, Morris Lapidus, and Arthur C. Danto (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 2003), p 13.

8 Email communication with the artist.

9 To hear the message, go to www.parkett.com and click on the artist's name.

10 "Lustmord's" theme was the rape of women in wartime; messages were written on human skin, some in ink mixed with women's blood. In *Jenny Holzer* (Phaidon, 1998), David Joselet wrote: "In Holzer's art, linguistic evocations of physical violation are paralleled by their sculptural performance of the body's inscriptions." (p 50).

11 To view the designs, go to: http://www.ez entertainment.net/news/DamianiPitt.htm

above
Jenny Holzer
With you inside me comes the knowledge of my death, 1994
sterling silver snake ring with inscription, felt-lined wooden case
1 5/8 x 3 3/8 x 2 1/8"
produced by Patrick Muff, Cologne
ed. 75, signed and numbered
© Parkett Publishers and Jenny Holzer

Richard Tuttle and Kiki Smith
Bouquet, 2001
18k gold, 19th-century silk damask,
armature wire, pinewood, hardware
8 1/2 x 9 x 5 1/2"
edition of 18
Courtesy the artists and Editions Fawbush, NY

Ron Ho

Heritage and Hybridity

by Matthew Kangas

In the art world, to be discussed is to be remembered. Each generation of critics and curators selects its own intellectual mentors and creative models. Those artists whose art is open-ended and flexible enough to withstand a panoply of critical approaches are those whose achievements may approach greatness.

Ron Ho is such an artist. Since his first solo museum exhibition in 1975, the Hawaii-born Ho, now 71, has been labeled a craft artist, ethnographer, pedagogue, assemblagist, sculptor, jeweler, and even installation artist by an array of commentators from poets to art historians. But within the past decade, critical understanding has begun to catch up with the wide range of ideas radiating from his necklaces.

In the catalogue that accompanied Ho's recent show at the Bellevue Arts Museum, "Dim Sum at the On-On Tea Room: The Jewelry of Ron Ho," curator Stefano Catalani and co-author Ben Mitchell are generous in their respect and praise of Ho's artistic and professional accomplishments. Within the handsome hardbound document, Ho's work is linked to artists as diverse and pertinent as Joseph Cornell, Robert Rauschenberg, Auguste Rodin, and Marcel Duchamp, as well as a string of important art critics and philosophers.

Dunhaung - Return to the Silk Road, 2005
13 1/2 x 3 1/2 x 5/8"
African shell, green jade bead, faceted crystal beads, fabricated silver
Collection of Joan Christoffersen

Without rehearsing Mitchell's adoring account in his catalogue essay, "Migrations: The Jewelry of Ron Ho,"[1] it is safe to say that Mitchell's contribution is half factual chronology, half heavily intentionalized interpretation. He took Ho's statements at face value and largely left them there. A similar reliance on biography and anecdote has characterized much the previous writing on Ho's work.

If we can, for the purpose of fresh critical interpretation, sever Ho's elaborate backstory from each necklace (where the found objects were from, who commissioned each necklace, what it means to him), it may be possible to provide a short wearer's, or viewer's, guide to the rich possibilities of meaning that are inherent in these ravishingly beautiful and complex objects.

In the process, Ho is revealed as an American rather than hyphenated Chinese-American artist. Not to downplay the sincerity of his search for identity among his ancestors, or to diminish the painstaking prior critical efforts to trace Ho's "becoming Chinese," in curator Jennifer Saville's words, but it may be more fruitful to follow

Dim Sum at the On-On Tea Room, 1990
14 1/2 x 2 7/8 x 1"
forger and fabricated silver Chinese chair, silver bamboo steamer, Plexiglas carved dim sum, glass beads
Collection of Sandy Wainright

clockwise from above
African Adventure, 1976
10 1/4 x 6 1/4 x 5/8"
African ivory carved masks, African blue bottle beads, ivory artifacts, forged and fabricated silver
Collection of Ella Steffens

All Fall Down, 1969
bone domino, bone collar buttons, bone underwear buttons, ebony, forged and fabricated silver
11 1/2 x 5 7/8 x 3/4"
Collection of Tacoma Art Museum

Treasures of the Orient II, 1979
9 1/4 x 5 7/8 x 1 3/4"
carved ivory kagami-buta (a variant of the netsuke), carved Chinese jade button, pearls, forged and fabricated silver
Collection of Irene Y. Namkung

Catalani's suggestion of a series of "visual and language systems" rotating around an organizing compositional principle: the modernist grid.[2] That way, future viewers may be free to interpret unfettered by intentional and anecdotal clutter, instead of constantly seeking to answer the question, "Who is Ho?"

Imagine a nation where Asian cultural practices matter more than they do today. Imagine a culture in which negotiating positions and status requires a bringing together of far-flung sources; not that different from turn-of-the-century France, for example, when the tainted bounty of colonialism led to the influence of African art on Cubism. With its wealth of "sought and found" ethnic artifacts and souvenirs so seamlessly enmeshed, Ho's first necklace, *All Fall Down* (1969), promises a cultural hybridity at least 20 years ahead of its time.

Seen today, Ho's compiling of elements from ancient aboriginal cultures of Alaska (*Bering Sea*, 1985), Chinese and Japanese folk art (*Ancestral Maternal Pi*, 1970, and *Treasures of the Orient II*, (1979), along with images of television sets (*TV*

Guide, 1992), architecture (*International Infrastructure*, 1996) and animals (*Barricade*, 1994), to name just a few, looks strikingly reflective of American society now: diverse and multi-cultural.

The more recent waves of immigrants from Japan, China, India, Pakistan, Tibet, and elsewhere are also transforming the middle-class art-buying public. These are the future collectors of Ron Ho's art, as his history is rediscovered. The 8,000-plus, ethnically diverse attendance at the artist's retrospective at the Bellevue Arts Museum was a harbinger of the audience who will continue the discussion and analysis of his art with their own special insights and comparable backgrounds. His work will make perfect sense to them.

Ho transcended the ethnic specificity of his original inspirations and developed a jumbled, geographically dispersed imagery, closer to the new American cultural hybridity.

With Asian-Americans torn between assimilation and the preservation of cultural practices, Ho's jewelry offers a compelling model of how both may be combined. Images of bygone days, camels, and horses are featured in two necklaces, *Return to the Silk Route I* and *II* (1988). *Forbidden City* (1988) and *Dim Sum at the On-On Tea Room* (1990) were both made before Ho ever set foot on Chinese soil. They draw upon other family members' memories rather than his own. Is such nostalgia an authentic or degraded cultural meaning?

After his first trip to China in 1994 (one of five), Ho's nostalgia for cultural traditions such as Confucianism (*The Immortals*, 1994) took on denser, more detailed dimensions. Ho may be following upon the penchant of his mentor and friend Ramona Solberg (1921–2005) for heavy tourist shopping, but, as author Mitchell points out, when Ho turned to using fabricated sterling silver, copper, and brass as more overarching backdrops for the minute found objects, he came into his full maturity. When he made *Tea Time* (1996), he was already 60.

On the other hand, as curators of antique Asian art museums know, postwar and new immigrant communities may not be nostalgic at all, but rather aggressively forward-looking and suspicious of Asian artistic traditions that seem too linked to oppressive and inequitable political and economic systems. Ho's position within this matrix remains unclear: he uses old, loaded objects but he sets them in new contexts.

Ho has no choice. His acculturated respect for family and traditions rooted in China (and transplanted by his parents from Canton) led to works of the first half of his career and re-emerged in the past decade after his trips throughout the People's Republic. However, as the recent retrospective made clear, Ho transcended the ethnic specificity of his original inspirations and developed a jumbled, geographically dispersed imagery, closer to the new American cultural hybridity.

It is as if his first necklaces involved a recovery of ethnicity; the middle period explored fragments of Nepal, Afghanistan, Indian, Africa, Indonesia, and Alaska; and the most recent work has grown out of the China of Deng Xiao Peng: crowded, adventurous, tethered to 4,000 years of history, but also glittering and glamorous. Paraphrasing Deng, to be richly varied and diverse in sources is glorious.

During Ho's "middle kingdom" period (1975–94), the artist undertook a number of trips abroad. This was an internationalizing of his vision, a yearning for a China he had not yet visited. These excursions found their way into his tapestry of tourist trinkets, antique flea market finds, and environmental fragments such as oyster shells.

Ecology is a sub-theme in Ho's art, one that is little remarked upon. The animals that appear in the guise of carved jade and other materials are often endangered or imperiled species like salamanders, butterflies, geese, and monkeys. These, in turn, have symbolic powers in China of, respectively, endurance, transformation, marriage, and longevity.

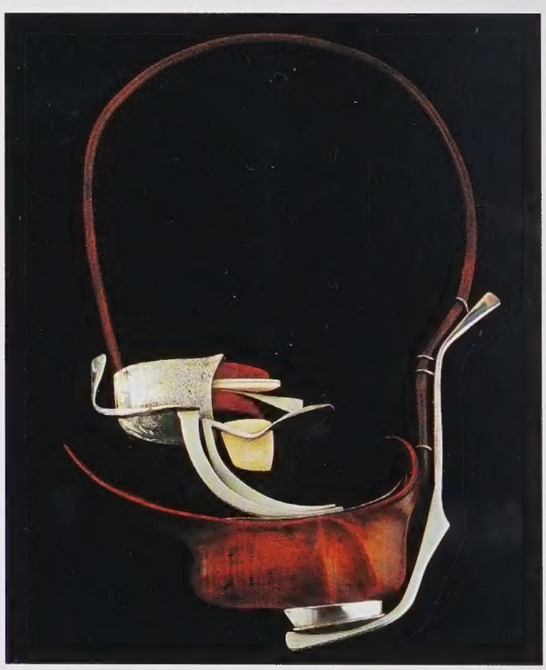
Although Ho has never visited Africa, *African Adventure* (1976) contains carved ivory masks set into a vertical and horizontal linear pattern, all connected by deep blue glass African trade beads and forged and fabricated silver. Honoring complex indigenous peoples rather than appropriating them, the masks stand out as compositional elements that are not as condensed as in other works.

Tale of the Ancient Mariner (1975) alludes to British Romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge's legendary poem of 1798, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." A story of what happens when man damages nature (the mariner kills an albatross and is forever haunted), Coleridge's poem is transmuted into a necklace with an English-made mother-of-pearl carving of a man surrounded by five opals, hovering above a silver-outlined antique Chinese gilded and stamped

clockwise from right
Tale of the Ancient Mariner, 1975
9 1/2 x 5 1/8 x 1/2"
mother of pearl carving from England, Mexican and Australian opals, black pearl, forged and fabricated silver
Collection of Mrs. Katherine Crossley

Borobodur, 1979
carved Indonesian wooden sword hilt, carved teak, ivory, leather with forged and fabricated silver
12 x 9 x 2"
Collection of Mrs. Kirby Torrance, Jr.

Gum San Journey, 1996
fabricated silver, Merlin's gold and copper, with Chinese antique porcelain jar fragment, Chinese fabricated silver artifact and leather
12 1/2 x 6 x 1"
Collection of Dorene Tully



silver artifact. The artifact resembles the waves of the ocean and undersea plant life. The basic narrative aspects of a masterpiece of English literature are compressed highly in one of Ho's most culturally layered works. The center of the poem also details the repeated clashes between the mariner's and ship crew's Englishness and the exotic (to them) sights and adventures they find in their endless travels after the bird is killed. Ho is reminding us how the journey from Europe to Asia became one, two centuries later, from Asia to North America.

to proudly wear the pink triangle of ACT UP and other political organizations. To be Asian *and* gay may have meant help did not reach all those who needed it during the AIDS crisis. The well-worn black leather jacket is hanging on the back of the bentwood café chair. This work, too, would look great against a muscle-filled black tee shirt.

The transition from worshipful child genealogist to adult professional male; from tourist to traveler; from making women's adornment to that for men; these are some of the other journeys Ron Ho has taken. Every bit as important as his obsessive retracing of the Silk Road in China and Central Asia (as expressed in the works *Xian* and *Dunhuang*, both 2005), these other passages were just as necessary in the formation of his artistic vision: his palette, workbench of ideas, his secret store of memory-triggering treasures.

The basic narrative aspects of a masterpiece of English literature are compressed highly in one of Ho's most culturally layered works.

The question of the wearer's gender also raises important critical questions in Ho's art. Often photographed wearing his own necklaces, Ho's appearance seems a cumulative form of performance art, unacknowledged, but not that dissimilar from artist Nick Cave. Are some necklaces—or neckpieces—more appropriate for men? Just as in certain South Pacific indigenous societies, the more prominent and precious breast- or chest-plates are worn by men as a sign of tribal seniority and status. Works like *Borobodur* (1979), *Bering Sea* (1985), and *Vanished Dreams* (1992) seem geared to the male wearer. In *Borobodur* (named after the archaeological site in Java, Indonesia), the polished silver offsets the carved teak and ivory like parts in a Danish Modern chair. Sleek and curved, yet with a macho wooden sword hilt, this work cries out for the right gym-sculpted body. *Bering Sea* has strong Native American overtones, with its composition of North Pacific Coast "formline" totem-pole-type drawings. Bird beaks are echoed along with feathers, harpoon blades, and the ubiquitous eye of the raven shape at its base.

Vanished Dreams is Ho's commentary on the double whammy of AIDS in minority communities, and the activists who emerged from often strongly homophobic cultural settings

Poised as infinitely unravelable puzzles or rebuses, the necklaces of Ron Ho use the global history of adornment to construct sculpture that must be worn and discussed. After all, to be talked about is to last and approach greatness. ◘

Matthew Kangas is a Seattle-based art critic whose recent collection of essays, *Craft and Concept: The Rematerialization of the Art Object* (Midmarch Arts Press) contains articles previously published in *Metalsmith*.

Photos: Rex Rystedt

1 Ben Mitchell, "Migrations: The Jewelry of Ron Ho," in Stefano Catalani and Ben Mitchell, *Dim Sum at the On-On Tea Room: The Jewelry of Ron Ho* (Bellevue, Wash.: Bellevue Arts Museum, 2006), pp. 13-26.

2 Stefano Catalani, "Sought and Found," in Catalani and Mitchell, *Dim Sum at the On-On Tea Room: The Jewelry of Ron Ho*, pp. 9-11.

above
Vanished Dreams, 1992
fabricated silver bentwood chair, repouseed leather jacket with pink enamel triangle
14 x 2 1/2 x 2"
Collection of Tacoma Art Museum

Ted Noten

Decoration Deconstructed

by Brett Littman

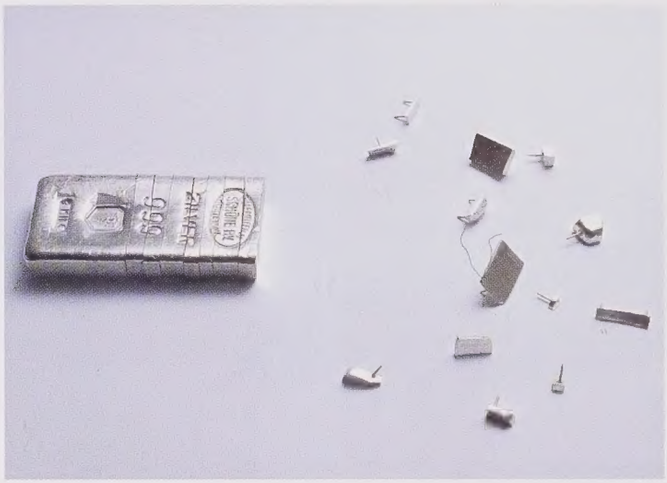
Although Dutch artist Ted Noten is often labeled as a conceptual jewelry maker, a more accurate description would be part economist, part performance artist, part psychologist, and part storyteller. Much of Noten's work comes from his "annoyance and frustration" when looking at traditional jewelry and the value systems it promotes. He feels compelled to "tell the truth" about what precious and non-precious materials mean to him and to society at large. Accordingly, he experiments with a wide variety of techniques, materials, and formats, driven by the desire to create objects that are grounded in the most contemporary philosophical, aesthetic, and social issues. Noten deconstructs our pre-conceived notions about jewelry, valuation, beauty, and the functionality of decorative things.

Since graduating from Amsterdam's Rietveld Academy in 1990, Noten has enlisted a number of creative strategies in an attempt to broaden the parameters of jewelry. These include: encasing objects in acrylic; do-it-yourself projects; jewelry that foregrounds its materiality; performative works; and commissions that mine the client's psychology and personal history. Noten's most frequently employed method is encasement, a technique that allows for the preservation of animate and inanimate objects, while removing the sensation of touch. An early and crucial encased work, *Turbo Princess* (1995), features a dead mouse wearing a pearl necklace embedded in a clear acrylic pendant. About the work's origins Noten relays, "A pearl necklace? As the subject of a contemporary art event? I guess at the time I was infuriated by the idea someone had even dared ask me to join a group of designers who were invited to work with this most bourgeois and boring icon in the whole history of jewelry: a string of pearls. I'd rather string myself up by them! A new take on the pearl necklace for me would mean unconditional surrender and probably that was the reason I decided to take part. Not to join, but to battle from within."[1] A photograph of the piece caused quite a stir when it appeared in the Amsterdam papers. The local chapter of the Society for Protection of Animals protested outside of his studio, and someone accused him of trying to play God for denying the

Chew Your Own Brooch, 1998
chewing gum with cast sculpture
unlimited edition

Turbo Princess, 1995
mouse, pearl necklace cast in
acrylic, whitened silver, steel wire
3 x 6 x 1"

Murdered Innocence, 2005
gun with silencer, holy
communion dress, pearl,
diamond, bullet cast in clear
acrylic suitcase
9 1/2 x 26 3/4 x 2 3/8"



By turning the tables on the traditional designer-client relationship, he was able to illustrate "the falseness of the popular belief that making art is easy, and people were made aware of the fact that the profession of designer is to serve."

mouse the right to decompose in a natural way. Noten's impulse to subvert the wearer's expectation of how a pearl necklace is perceived and by whom it should be worn delivered a sharp social statement about this precious material.

In the series "Survival Bags 1–5" (1997–98), Noten set out to cast three species of fish, a piece of meat, and a cracked egg, each in a clear acrylic handbag. Playing off the phrase, "break the glass in case of an emergency," Noten hijacks the wearer's desire and primal need for sustenance by placing these items beyond reach. We are left to only contemplate the exterior surface of the food in a platonic reflective state. With his series "Superbitch Bags 1–6" (2002–04), Noten upped the ante, replacing foodstuff with actual working guns in the acrylic bags. In *Murdered Innocence* (2005), Noten embedded a gun, communion dress, diamond, pearl, and bullet within a rectangular briefcase. Of course, the conundrum is that the guns can never be accessed to commit a crime—or be used for protection.

The artist has also encased hair, crumbs, insects, gold, feathers, and other items in rings, bracelets, and brooches, sometimes in semi-opaque epoxy, which makes them more mysterious and difficult to discern. Perhaps because of their smaller scale and intimate relationship to their wearers, these works seem more poetic and less politically charged than the "Survival" or "Superbitch" bags.

Noten has conceived of a number of "do-it-yourself" projects, in which the wearers become the makers. *Chew Your Own Brooch* is one such project. Provoked by his interest in gum stains in public spaces, Noten invited people to chew gum and form it into personalized icons that could later be cast in silver and then gold-plated. According to Noten, the *Chew Your Own Brooch* project "revealed an unforeseen and therefore interesting reflex. Buyers actually suffered from stage fright. They just did not dare to submit the brooches they had chewed."[2] By turning the tables on the traditional designer-client relationship, he was able to illustrate "the falseness of the popular belief that making art is easy, and people were made aware of the fact that the profession of designer is to serve."[3] The *Chew Your Own Brooch* project continues, with a number of institutions and galleries inviting Noten to stage chewing events. A connoisseur of masticated gum, Noten can now analyze the minds of the gum chewers. "It's wonderful to see how the designs often mirror the personality of the chewer," he notes. "You could almost do a phenomenological study linking the design to the chewer's profession....The museum curator who painstakingly tried to emulate a Giacometti sculpture; or the plasterer who just pressed the wet chewing gum against his teeth."[4]

In works like *Silver Dinner* (2000), Noten employs another methodology. For this series of brooches Noten did nothing

Silver Dinner (brooches), 2000
1 kilo block of pure silver cut into brooches of various sizes
Collection Arnhem Museum of Modern Art, the Netherlands

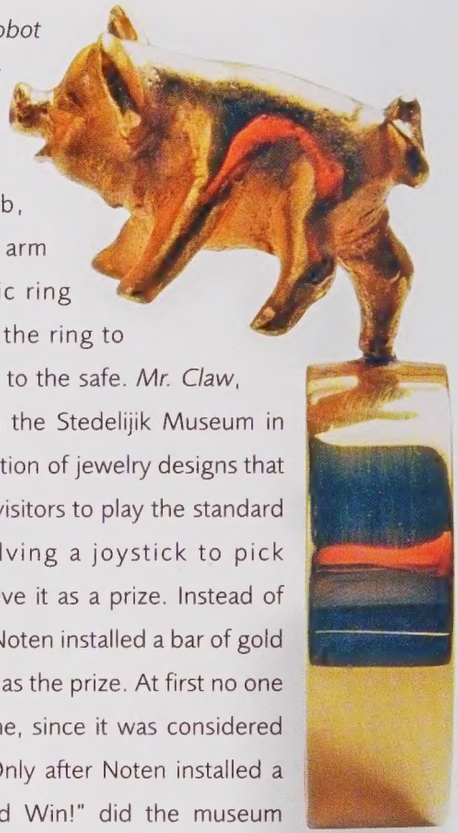
Design Icon Rings, 2005
sterling silver with engraved icons (Thonet, Rietveld, Starck, Mendini, etc.)
diameter 3/4"

more than cut a raw kilogram of silver into smaller pieces, and then sell them according to the value of their actual weight in silver, as it fluctuated on the open market. A *Silver Dinner* brooch's resale value is then only as good as the market performance of silver on any given day. These pieces are prime examples of self-reflexive jewelry that not only reveal their own construction but also address current economic realities. His *Monetary Necklace* (2004) also plays on market forces. After the euro was introduced into the Netherlands in 2002, Noten created the piece, which is comprised of devalued Dutch coins. Applying orange paint helmets, sunglasses, and piercings to the monarchs portrayed on the coins, Noten then strung them into a necklace that could be bought and worn, although now devoid of any monetary value.

For Noten, the Mercedes-Benz represents the most important icon in the western world. "CEOs, real estate agents, small-time hustlers in the building trade, politicians, Mongolian drug dealers, and Birmingham greengrocers: all around the globe they share a love for a Mercedes. More than any other ornament, it symbolizes success and social status."[5] For "The Mercedes Benz Brooches" series Noten conceived of a staged robot performance at a car show, during which a laser would create individual pieces of custom jewelry for the audience by cutting the exterior of a Mercedes-Benz. (Mercedes-Benz was not too enthusiastic about this idea, because the samples of the car chassis that Noten worked on looked awfully thin). Ultimately Noten staged a performance at an art gallery and found one willing participant who allowed him to hand-cut a small piece of his car into a brooch. The owner proudly wears it when he drives his Mercedes-Benz around town, with its matching hole in the exterior. Status icons and logos figure in other of Noten's works, including his *Design Icon Rings* (2005) and *Brand Covers* (1995), a series of metal brooches that can be adjusted to cover up logos on designer clothes and accessories.

100 Brooches, 2003
from Mercedes-Benz E-class 210 exterior
dimensions variable
The Droog Collection

Golden Pig Ring, 2001
18k gold
1 3/4 x 1 1/8 x 3/4"



Noten has also recently explored performance-based jewelry, intended to interact with site-specific environments. The "Global Tactile Pieces" series, started in 2006, evolved from Noten's complex travel schedule for his exhibitions, workshops and projects. Noten often finds his inspiration from the streets of different cities he visits. An active photo documenter of things that catch his eye, he will also sometimes take wax impressions of elements like walls, people's skin, and car ornaments that eventually find their way into compositions. For "Volume 1" of this series, he took impressions from around his hometown of Amsterdam, cast the forms in silver, painted them pink and then mounted the fragments as pendants, brooches, or rings. Akin to souvenirs, the "Global Tactile Pieces" become records of Noten's time-based actions. They are experiments in collapsing the real world into the act of making jewelry and open up lines of inquiry beyond the decorative and status considerations often associated with the medium. Such works fulfill one of Noten's aims: "Jewellery is out on the streets again. To me personally that's a great relief. For most of the audience it is still a bit of a puzzle."[6]

In the theatrical *A Robot and a Ring*, made for an exhibition titled "Unstaged" in an Amsterdam Arts Club, Noten devised a robot arm that extracted a plastic ring from a safe, displayed the ring to visitors, then returned it to the safe. *Mr. Claw*, first installed in 2004 in the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam for an exhibition of jewelry designs that used gold, encouraged visitors to play the standard funhouse game involving a joystick to pick something up and retrieve it as a prize. Instead of junky toys and trinkets, Noten installed a bar of gold worth about 13000 euro as the prize. At first no one would touch the machine, since it was considered part of the exhibition. Only after Noten installed a sign that said "Play and Win!" did the museum visitors start engaging in the game. "It was obvious

"With Ted it is all about the surprise, the tension between the new and recklessness, his permanent desire to perform magic."

Hotel Acacia, 2006
from the series "Global Tactile Pieces 1, Amsterdam"
photograph symbiotically related to jewelry
11 x 15"

The City Muse, 2006
from the series "Global Tactile Pieces 1, Amsterdam"
necklace, ring, hair pin, earrings, pocket piece,
silver 925 – 1000, pink lacquer, nylon wire

that the bar of gold would never come out," says Noten, "but people were attracted by the idea."[7] At the end of the exhibition, Noten collected more than 4000 euro, which covered the purchase price of the robotic claw.

The *Golden Pig Ring* (2001), also commissioned by the Stedelijik Museum, is another example of Noten's performance jewelry. The museum's ticket cashier wore a large gold ring in the shape of pig on her hand, a reference to a Jeff Koons sculpture in the museum's permanent collection. A live-feed video camera in the ticket booth focused on the hand of the seller, and all of the transactions with the customers were filmed and screened in the lobby. Of course the ring featured prominently in every encounter, forcing both the wearer and customer to interact with this unique work.

Jewelers often take on private commissions for wedding bands or other special occasion jewelry. Often the client looks at the artist's standard forms and chooses custom materials, jewels, and details with which to embellish the final product. For Noten, the private commission represents an "open field" to work with the client, to explore their own history and personal narrative. *Ageeth's Dowry* (1999) came about when a soon-to-be groom asked Noten to create a special piece that could be presented to his future wife. Other than the budget, not much else was discussed. Noten wrote to family members and close friends of the bride and groom and asked them to send a ring and the story of the piece of jewelry as a contribution to her "dowry." He received family heirlooms, ordinary rings, and even a ring used in a motorcycle. Once collected, the rings were cast into a clear acrylic handbag, which the groom presented to the bride on their wedding day.

Noten completed three commissions for the Dutch physician and art collector Dr. Jeu van Sint Fiet and his wife, Netty, in 2004. "With Ted it is all about the surprise, the tension between the new and recklessness, his permanent desire to perform magic," says Dr. van Sint Fiet. "When we discussed the idea for the *Physician's Bag,* he had just completed *Ageeth's Dowry* and

Mr. Claw, 2004
1 kilo gold block, joystick amusement game
Installation at "Geel Metalliek," Stedelijik Museum, Amsterdam

Ice Necklace, 2007
18k gold, birch branches, ring, golden pistol, grasshoppers, clump of gold, housefly with diamond, synthetic medallion, cultured pearls, cast in clear acrylic
largest sphere diameter 3"

Jewellery," which asserts: "The moment the wearer was banished from the equation and the very social codes that had provided it with its most specific meaning were vilified, contemporary jewellery gave up its raison d'etre....Unless the self-inflicted isolation is radically abandoned, the discipline will have to settle for its position in the fringes of the fringes."[9]

One can only hope that more jewelry designers and artists take a serious look at Noten's practice and incorporate the social and economic dimensions of making into their own day-to-day thinking. Such explorations into the realms of what it means to be an object maker will only enhance our understanding of the status of art and creativity in our contemporary society.

Brett Littman is executive director of The Drawing Center in New York and an active art and design critic. His April 2007 audio interview with Ted Noten is available at www.wps1.org, under the Material Culture show archives.

"The moment the wearer was banished from the equation and the very social codes that had provided it with its most specific meaning were vilified, contemporary jewellery gave up its raison d'etre...."

this motivated us as collectors to commission him. Ted requested a set of typical physician's instruments, the tools of my trade, and eventually he also asked me to part with the handle of the doctor's case I was using at the time. People outside of the profession might not appreciate the importance of that handle. It is, in fact, your only lifeline when you visit a patient at home."[8] In this case, the commission takes into consideration a very deep understanding of not only the individual, but also his profession and aesthetics as practiced in his everyday life.

Noten continues to push the boundaries of his own artistic practice. A recent commission for the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam interfaces his jewelry to demographic studies. All visitors to the museum will receive a special brooch designed by Noten, which allows entry into a special exhibition in exchange for their demographic information. This way the museum, the visitors, and the artist exchange something useful. Public projects like this realize the directives expressed in the manifesto, "In Celebration of the Street: Manifesto of the New

1 Gert Staal, *Ted Noten. CH_2=C(CH_3)C(=O)OCH_3 enclosures and other TN's*, (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2006), p. 2. In my opinion this is one of the best books ever published on artistic process. Its anti-chronological structure, innovative design elements by Joost Grooten, unusual chapter titles, self-critical cataloging of his complete output, texts ghost written by Gert Staal in Noten's voice and its "international yellow page" listings for other jewelers, supply stores, fabricators, manufacturers, galleries and design shops make it an indispensable resource for anyone interested in better understanding the organized chaos that often accompanies the creative impulse.
2 Staal, p. 30
3 Staal, p. 30
4 Staal, p. 38
5 Staal, p. 56
6 Staal, p. 238
7 Staal, p. 214
8 Staal, p. 187
9 Staal, p. 115

above left
Ageeth's Dowry, 1999
56 gold rings and other objects cast in clear acrylic, pearl handle
7 x 10 x 3 1/8"

In Celebration of the Street

Manifesto of the New Jewellery

by Gert Staal in consultation with Ted Noten

Originally published in Gert Staal, *Ted Noten. CH2=C(CH3)C(=O)OCH3 enclosures and other TN's*, (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2006), pp. 113-116.

Contemporary jewellery is dead. It crashed right before our eyes. See how it now hangs from the wall of the gallery, bent, broken, rigor mortis setting in. Protected by the stylised gravediggers of the art world, on display in its transparent coffin, the stench of rot swirling safely behind the glass. The obituary, *comme il faut*, is subtly disguised as an invitation or included in a catalogue, sustaining the semblance of life a little while longer. At the appointed time the crowd, elegant as always, swoops into the great hall to grace the official ceremony with its presence. Glasses are raised in memory of the deceased, astute analyses exchanged, the lack of recognition lamented. It seems as if everyone, excepting of course those who faithfully attend the High Mass of contemporary jewellery design, is visually impaired.

As the jewellery piece was being nailed to the wall it had let rip one last cry for help. Just when everything was going so well, fate had struck. The visual arts just within reach, cruising round the next bend right in front of it instead of the usual full lap ahead. Almost bumper to bumper... all it needed was the extra spurt in a game of catch up that had started somewhere in the heroic nineteen sixties. What hadn't it done in the intervening years to fall into the good graces of its devotees? Its reputation as plaything of the rich finally cast off, its abstraction embraced, only to be swiftly replaced by the lyricism of the individual artist railing against the dictate of good taste. Museums had become an accepted podium and jewellery decided the time was ripe to celebrate its worth in all its godforsaken vanity once more.

In the pursuit of a place amongst the visual arts, jewellery design had reinvented itself aplenty and now finally the finish was in sight. Justice at last, mission accomplished: game over. But along the way it had become so fixated on acquiring status that it had lost its purpose and hence control over the wheel. The struggle for emancipation had become its ultimate goal. Then the crash came. And now here it hangs on the wall of the gallery like an X-ray of a cardiac arrest. It nestles in its glass case, oblivious to the fact that it already stopped breathing on the workbench of its maker.

Contemporary jewellery is an illusion. As artificial as the stories told by the scribes who with their apologias try to invest a whiff of credibility. By appealing to the uniqueness of every single creation process, they try to justify its existence; not just of one piece in particular or of a designer's entire oeuvre but of the discipline as a whole. They tirelessly advocate a myth. In their hands, every piece of jewellery is interpreted as something without precedent. It's a one-off, singular and brilliant–the work of a genius. And yet it simultaneously turns into a *pars pro toto*.

Their pens scour the brains of the true bearers of the Word: the artists who tend to intuit what a particular jewellery piece should tell if it is to fulfil its ambition of the new. Personal fear, euphoria and associations form the uncompromising basis from which jewellery will stir towards a new meaning. These are the stories recorded by the chroniclers of jewellery, like telegraphers of the holy above. Take them at their world and you will find yourself dangling from a very thin rope. It seems as if the world of jewellery design is created anew every day and with every invention the truth of that world becomes a little more definitive. They avow a dogmatic faith in the incessant urge of contemporary jewellery design to be innovative, but forty years on in this alleged revolution their creationist stories can no longer conceal the epileptic fit convulsing the heart of this discipline. Contemporary jewellery pieces are like Rotary badges. As functional and just as steeped in the conventions they once tried to undermine. They have become the shorthand gesture of recognition for those who speak the same language. A rusty code that only has value for the intimate few.

Contemporary jewellery is autistic. It doesn't read

newspapers or books. Not out of principle but because of a lack of interest. It distrusts history as much as it wishes to sidestep reality. It cherishes and nurtures its own, often incomprehensibly cryptic language to avoid criticism, questions, comparison and even the smallest expression of doubt concerning its intentions. Entrenched behind a parapet of silence it resists criticism and refuses to engage with the banalities of daily reality. Sometimes with such virtuosity that the parapet itself takes on meaning; when the sublime silence develops an autonomous power that lifts the result over and above the natural boundaries of a particular jewellery piece. But as often as not, there reigns a petulant silence, like that of a child trying to get its own way, pursing its lips and with folded arms striking a stubborn pose. It's a battle against parental authority that is lost up front because winning or losing in the end simply boils down to who has the longest breath.

In its ambition to remove itself from any form of critical context, contemporary jewellery has only managed to further isolate itself. Not only from the art world but from its public as well. It complains of a lack of attention, yet wilfully retreats into the shadows of provincial life. Here, in the safe isolation of the artist studio, passions that run high are hammered into every square millimetre of material and moulded into shape. That process, characteristic for the creation of every piece of jewellery for thousands of years was kept in balance by the astute awareness of its actual calling: as an accessory that ultimately expresses the aspirations and achievements of the wearer, not those of the designer. Yes, conventional, and yes, inevitably judged on craftsmanship but for that fact also recognisable and appreciated by the many. The goldsmith followed the market and was – depending on his talents and skills – able to influence the tastes and fashions of his time; in exceptional cases even successfully introducing an indelible signature that bore the hand of its maker.

Modern jewellery lost this simple logic along the way. Every designer started to believe him or herself to be that exceptional case. Each of their stories took precedence over that of the end user, the wearer. His personal signature no longer had to be proven, was no longer a priori under discussion, now that it was simultaneously the source and ultimate goal of every creation. This transformed the typically extrovert ornament of yore into a piece of almost completely introverted sculpture. It chose the gallery over the shop, the collection over the street, the conversation between friends over social interaction.

Contemporary jewellery is superfluous. After all, what could it possibly contribute what other visual arts do at least equally as well? Intimacy, unease, voyeurism, consolation, exuberance, silence, beauty...? None of these belong exclusively to the domain of the jewellery designer. The moment the wearer was banished from the equation and the very social codes that had provided it with its most specific meaning were vilified contemporary jewellery gave up its raison d'etre. What followed was a turbulent but futile search for an emergency exit in a tunnel that just got darker and darker. Unless the self-inflicted isolation is radically abandoned, the discipline will have to settle for its position in the fringes of the fringes. Barely noticed and certainly unchallenged. Striving for a safe, because enemy-free existence that is thoroughly uninteresting since it is validated only by those few square inches necessary for its own conception. If it wants a chance of survival its maker will have to step out into more dangerous terrain. Return to his craft, if only to forget it. That means ditching forty years of dogma but getting in return centuries of conformism and defiance that will doubtlessly prove a far richer source.

Jewellery must be sentimental and never look for compromise.

Jewellery must be owned by the public if it wants to touch the public.

Jewellery must steal and seek to be stolen.

Jewellery must cherish its enemies in order to make friends.

Jewellery must forget the psychoanalysis of the studio.

Jewellery must go out into the street to eat and be eaten.

Jewellery must be shamelessly curious.

Jewellery must look where to attack and neglect its defences.

Jewellery must use traditional codes in order to break them.

Jewellery must neither forgive nor forget.

Jewellery must ignore all prescription.

Gert Staal is a design critic and writer based in Amsterdam.

REVIEWS

"JESSICA JOSLIN: THE BRASS MENAGERIE"
LISA SETTE GALLERY
SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA
NOVEMBER 2 – DECEMBER 30, 2006

by D WOOD

A key dynamic within contemporary art is the interplay of attraction and repulsion. A viewer is drawn to a work's composition or surface, only to be repelled by morbid content. But while Jessica Joslin, like Damien Hirst, has a penchant for expired animals, one's reaction to her "Brass Menagerie" is an emotional ricochet from attraction to repulsion and back again. Like the mutts that peer out from cages at pet shelters, these charming, endearing creatures beg to be adopted, although their ancestry remains questionable.

Joslin works as a commercial model maker, building prototypes for toys. She embarked on the creation of curiosities for cabinets in 1992, when she found a bag of taxidermied bird parts, originally intended for early twentieth-century millinery. She primarily uses mechanical fastenings—miniature bolts, springs, hinges, universal joints—and some of the creatures are adjustable and can be disassembled for shipping. All of her parts have been legally and ethically obtained or cast and molded by Joslin herself.

From across the gallery one is attracted to the animal's familiar stances: a cat licking its paw, a fawn with ears pricked for sound, a fowl whose eye is searching for grubs, an albatross with its wings spread to dry. Joslin has a gift for capturing the physiognomy of fauna, adding realism to these fantastic beings. But while the forms are recognizable, these animals and birds exist as lines in space; their heads are mere skulls.

The skeletons are constructed of antique brass hardware and lamp fittings, cast pewter, wood finials, umbrella tips, buttons, beads, bone, and various other materials. One admires the perceptive eyes that have sorted through boxes at flea markets, and the pack-rat zeal that has housed the bits and pieces until needed. One also appreciates Joslin's ability to combine disparate parts, not only with creativity, but with technical prowess. The positive components are seamlessly melded, but the negative space, the imagined organs, muscles and blood, is also palpable.

All of the creatures have glass eyes, a factor that helps to encourage human bonding. Remember how lifelike antique dolls with glass eyes can seem? The same illusion of life is incorporated here. In addition, Joslin frequently uses glove leather for the ears, adding a visual softness that invites petting, albeit in a tiny portion of the body, as in the cuddly ears of the otherwise off-putting sculpture *Helmut*.

Joslin has given a name to each critter in her menagerie. Traditional pet names such as Spot or Ginger have been set aside for more formal or archaic ones—names like *Lambert, Serafina, Ludwig*, and *Perrin* signify that they, and their owners, are extraordinary. Some of them are set on fringed leather bases or perched on balls, perhaps to represent the precariousness of the reality/dream balance? Joslin continuously plays with our sensibilities, raising questions that are never clearly answered.

Cornelius is a hare standing on its hind legs with antique hardware and chandelier arms that elegantly define the curves of his spine and limbs. The shifting tones of the found objects and the varied joints provide interest for the viewer's roving eye, and one is continuously reminded of the former life of the found media.

Marco is an inanimate organ grinder's monkey, the cheeky assistant that works the crowd for coins. He sits, balanced by a curling tail, and proffers a ball. His jaunty hat holds down unruly fur hair and a grimace reveals tiny sharp teeth. Cute yet threatening, *Marco*, like all of Joslin's sculpture, is a compelling composition of opposites.

D Wood is a freelance writer who specializes in fine craft.

clockwise from top left
Cornelius, 2006
antique hardware and findings, chandelier arms, brass, bone, glove leather, fur and glass eyes
24 1/2 x 6 x 11"

Marco, 2006
antique hardware and findings, bone, beads, fur, painted wood, satin and velvet collar, glove leather and glass eyes
9 x 5 x 9"

Helmut, 2005
bone, brass, ball finials, leather, brass horn, velvet, glass eyes
36 x 12 x 40"

"CONTEMPORARY JEWELRY FROM BARCELONA"

GALERIE NOEL GUYOMARC'H BIJOUX D'ART. MONTRÉAL
OCTOBER 12 – NOVEMBER 19, 2006

by SHELLEY POMERANCE

In this jewelry show there is hardly a precious gem in sight, and hardly any noble metals. Instead, there is paper, papier maché, rubber, porcelain, plastic, acrylic, stones, string, and thread. The ring or brooch as we know it is merely a starting point. One artist says: "I do not want to make jewels with precious metals.... Metals are precious insofar as they bear feelings."

In this exhibition of contemporary jewelry from Barcelona, artists Xavier Ines Monclús, Ramon Puig Cuyás, and Silvia Walz show small colorful collages: figures, animals, and shapes, creating brooches that are light-hearted, whimsical narratives. Edith Bellod's poetic brooches (*Ronsard*) are little cups made of paper, in flowery orange, lime green, purple, red, turquoise, and mauve; each holds a small stone veiled in gossamer threads, like a cocoon. Ana Hagopian works in blood-red and pure white papier maché, recreating the papery husks, petals, stems, and seeds one finds in nature. And Grego Garciá Tebar freeze-frames romanticized images of children pictured with mythological beasts, trapping them not in amber but in little blocks of transparent acrylic.

But there is a contrasting movement in this collection, dealing not just with beauty and adornment, but with the exploration of a larger concept. Gemma Draper's *Is Almost the Right Shape* is a study in disequilibrium, a necklace of two connected circles of different sizes: the smaller one in blood-red coral, the larger in tooth-white magnesite beads. The larger loops around the neck, while the small one adjusts accordingly, amoeba-like, perhaps circling a breast to find its place.

Blanca Sanchez toys with the idea of the gem. She encases long strands of pearls in heated red or black rubber, concealing what is supposedly pure and valuable in an opaque, synthetic envelope. She has also crafted an entire ring, "gem" and band, out of gold-plated silver.

Moving even further from the jewel as we know it is Pilar Cotter's "Lastre," meaning ballast, a series of brooches that appear to be slightly deflated; round or oblong pillows and pouches are made of what looks like ecru-coloured cloth or rubberized material. One cushion even gives the impression of being quilted. In fact, they are porcelain, and latch on to clothing with silver hooks. They resemble sandbags thrown over the basket of a hot-air balloon, or inflatable life vests that have lost some of their air, meant perhaps to weigh you down in space or buoy you in water.

Marc Monzó coats thin silver plaques, circle, square, or rectangle, in different shades of car paint, then suspends each monochromatic shape from a steel pin, subtly echoing the plaque's curve or line. One is surprised by the utter simplicity of the piece—a shape, a color—the brooch reduced to its absolute essence.

Marcus Teipel (*Be Ringed*) creates metal ID tags for humans, much like those used to identify roosters, chickens, and other birds, complete with reference numbers, birth date, and body measurements. The metal band folds and clamps in place to form an ID ring, which is paired with a small plaque bearing a name, description, and displayed alongside it, photograph of a chicken. The names, such as Natividad and Jimena, are old-fashioned, as are the descriptions in Catalan, referring to the dreams, ambitions, and professions of another time, and perhaps to our inevitable disappearance or extinction. A complex endeavor, Teipel's project may be the most ambitious in this exhibition.

This show pulls in two directions: color, playfulness, and whimsy, countered by a starker, stronger, even darker, restraint, subtlety and minimalism, evoking mystery and questions still unanswered.

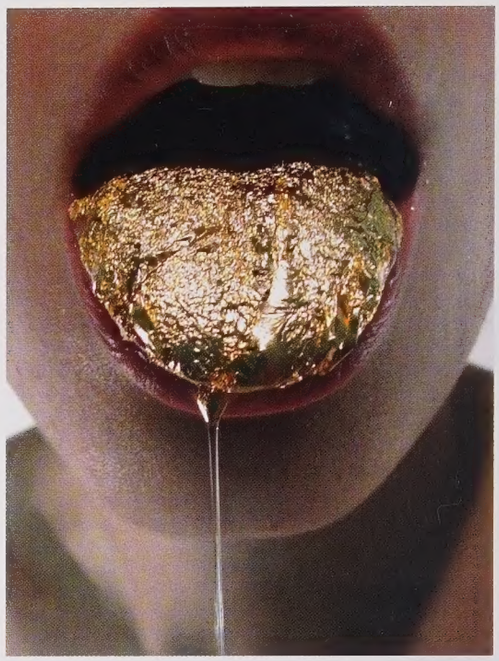
Shelley Pomerance is an arts writer living in Montréal.

clockwise from top left
Pilar Cotter
Brooch, 2006
porcelain, silver
3 1/8 x 5 x 1/2"

Marcus Teipel
Brooch and *Ring*, 2006
silver
brooch; 3 3/8 x 1 1/2"

Edith Bellod
Brooches, 2006
paper, pebbles, magnets
average size: 2 3/8 x 2 3/8 x 3/4"

REVIEWS



"COMING INTO VIEW"

JORDAN SCHNITZER MUSEUM OF ART
EUGENE, OREGON
DECEMBER 6, 2006 – FEBRUARY 18, 2007

by NAMITA WIGGERS

Co-curated by Mary Hallam Pearse and Sakurako Shimizu, "Coming into View" surveys examples of art jewelry that address questions of adornment and conceptual practice. Using a range of materials, twelve emerging artists from five countries together engage the body as object and subject, reveal an ambivalent relationship to standard markers of luxurious adornment, and minimize extravagant ornamental forms to silhouette and surface.

The body's internal elements provide the basis for external adornment by the artist duo Body Politics, in which fleshy forms and folded orifices created from molded synthetic materials pull organs to the surface. Reminiscent of the structure, palette, and textures of scientific models, the works are simultaneously intriguing in their physical revelation of typically hidden passages between the body's interior and exterior, and repulsive in their grotesque skin-like qualities. Marta Lwin, too, turns the body inside out, presenting images of bio-engineered living cell patches in petri-style dishes. When worn, these patches function as temporary biological "tattoos." Lauren Kalman, by contrast, calls attention to the natural embellishments appearing on the body's surface, where birthmarks and blemishes are delicately highlighted with gold dust. Fragmented into individual photographs, they are luminous public markers of the luxury of private intimacy.

Kalman's work links corporeal investigations with a marked ambivalence towards traditional jewelry materials. In her compelling video piece, *Adornment: Tongue*, a protruding tongue coated with 22 karat gold leaf twitches and salivates long beyond comfort, exacerbating the vulnerability and tension of desire. Yevgeniya Kaganovich and Ukiko Honda address denial and desire with a similarly ambivalent tone. Kaganovich encases each pearl in her necklace within a thin latex rubber disc, protected from both view and touch. Honda seamlessly unites halves of casting molds to create a series of rings where silhouette and form merge—sans the gems they were constructed to hold. The resulting vacancy casts a shadow when the ring is presented on a flat surface, and is filled with the wearer's skin when worn. Although Raissa Bump enlists traditional gems, the glitter serves more as a visual contrast to the "crafty" stitching of thread than as a focal point. Many of the works on view direct attention to the wearer as an element of the artwork rather than as a platform on which adornment rests. The body is on display along with the jewelry, and the jewel—as traditional marker of adornment—is obscured or removed entirely.

Constanze Schreiber, too, eschews gems but with a different purpose. Schreiber replaces glitter with fur's cowlicks and curls, emphasizing the silhouette rather than the substance of a form. Anya Kivarkis enacts a similar reduction of ornament, and plays on the tension between the "white cube" of the gallery and domestic embellishment. Displaying her works on small white cubes, Kivarkis fragments and miniaturizes a chandelier, then obscures the crystal's shine by layering it with white paint. Placed against highly polished surfaces, the "glitter" is instead a reflection of the wearer's surroundings, juxtaposed against the minimized chandelier form. This interest in reducing opulent decorative forms to silhouette is prevalent within design today, as seen in the stylized wall decals by Blik and the laser-cut paper window dressings of Tord Boontje.

The most successful works in this survey are discrete art objects that take on additional meaning when worn. While the shadows produced by Shari Pierce's delicate mappings of the United States at different historical moments function like Richard Tuttle's wire "drawings" off the body, the loss of shadow and inattention to neck cords lessens their impact as adornment. And the breadth and subtlety of Monika Strasser's deeply personal body of work is difficult to grasp from the single object on view.

Successful overall, this exhibition signals conceptual intersections with art in a broader cultural context, and further highlights the uniqueness of art jewelry as a vehicle for corporeal engagement, wherein the body acts as an integral element rather than merely a surface for display.

Namita Gupta Wiggers is curator at the Museum of Contemporary Craft in Portland, Oregon.

clockwise from top left
Body Politics
Rhosawuud, 2005
polyester (SMC), polyurethane (EP), latex, and edelstahl

Lauren Kalman
Adornment: Tongue, 2005
digital video, gold leaf, saliva, jar, frame

Anya Kivarkis
Brooch, 2005
sterling silver, enamel paint
2 1/2 x 1 3/4 x 1 1/4"
Photo: Mike Bray

"GOLDEN CLOGS, DUTCH MOUNTAINS"
VELVET DA VINCI, SAN FRANCISCO
MARCH 21 – APRIL 30

ORNAMENTUM GALLERY
HUDSON, NEW YORK
JULY 6 – AUGUST 6, 2007

MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF ART
BOSTON
OCTOBER 15 – DECEMBER 1, 2007

GALLERY LOUPE
MONTCLAIR, NEW JERSEY
JANUARY 13 – FEBRUARY 10, 2008

by JENNIFER CROSS GANS

The Dutch don't wear clogs any more, except at tourist traps, the Netherlands are still flat, and nearly half the artists in this show of contemporary Dutch jewelry aren't Dutch—so what's going on here? Curator Andrea Wagner's goals were to shake up any stereotypes people might have about the country's art, and to showcase changes among the generation of jewelry artists following such luminaries as Gijs Bakker, Emmy van Leersun, and Ruudt Peters. The show also questions whether there is any overriding Dutch style, particularly since most of the exhibitors were schooled, at least in part, at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy and the Sandberg Institute in Amsterdam.

All the artists on view have had a world-class classical training in the metal arts, but there isn't much visible in the way of precious metals and stones. Instead, the unusual materials become precious in their own right, whether they are antiques, recycled, natural wood, textiles, leather and fur, or plastics and epoxies. Several artists have done extensive research, particularly into man-made materials. Metal, when it occurs, is more commonly used as an accent.

In addition to a new view of preciousness, the show has its own definition of beauty, based on strong content. A number of artists expressed nostalgia for the past, specifically Dutch history. Iris Nieuwenburg created a brooch called *Dutch Glory*, featuring an antique photo of a woman in traditional costume. Francis Willemstijn, whose work is often based on traces of the disappearing past, fabricated *The Battle*, one of the few silver pieces in the show, saluting the country's triumphs as a seafaring nation.

Many of the works employed antique or recycled materials to deliver universal messages about love, life, and death. Constanze Schreiber combined silver and recycled iron horseshoe nails to create "Memento Mori" pendants, shaped like sinister and lumbering flies intent on their last meal. She showed a fur neckpiece with lead weights as a counterpoint, a reminder of the price the animal paid to create an object of beauty. Schreiber also fabricated *Mourning II*, a bracelet of silver skulls in memory of the dreadful legacy of the Pol Pot regime.

On a lighter note, a number of artists found whimsy and inspiration in household objects. One of the most striking was *Neckpiece/Plate: My Home is My Castle* by Gésine Hackenberg, who flawlessly cut small circles in an antique collectors' plate, mounting each disk in silver to create a necklace, then displayed the perforated plate for admirers to speculate on the process. She also enlisted kitchen towels to make a necklace, and as surfaces to render a *Hand Object*, *Spoon Votive*, and a *Spoon Necklace*.

Themes related to the environment, the body, and space exploration were also addressed in several works. The most appealing were two brooches by Ineke Heerkens, *Flourish Green* and *Stretching Bud* in silver and textile. An early piece by Iris Eichenberg titled *Hearts* featured an odd but lovingly clustered group of red wool ornaments, all bearing a passing resemblance to anatomical reality. Even stranger were out-of-this-world brooches by Jantje Fleischhut from her series "We Are All Space Travelers," and two brooches by Katja Prins from her series "Machines Are Us" and "Anatorium."

The show certainly succeeded in its goal of provoking and challenging viewers, as well as eliminating any lingering perceptions of the Dutch as being staid or humorless. It also reveals that Dutch artists are leaders among other Europeans and American artists in their investigations of fabric, plastic, found objects, and other unexpected materials.

Jennifer Cross Gans is a writer and studio jeweler in San Francisco.

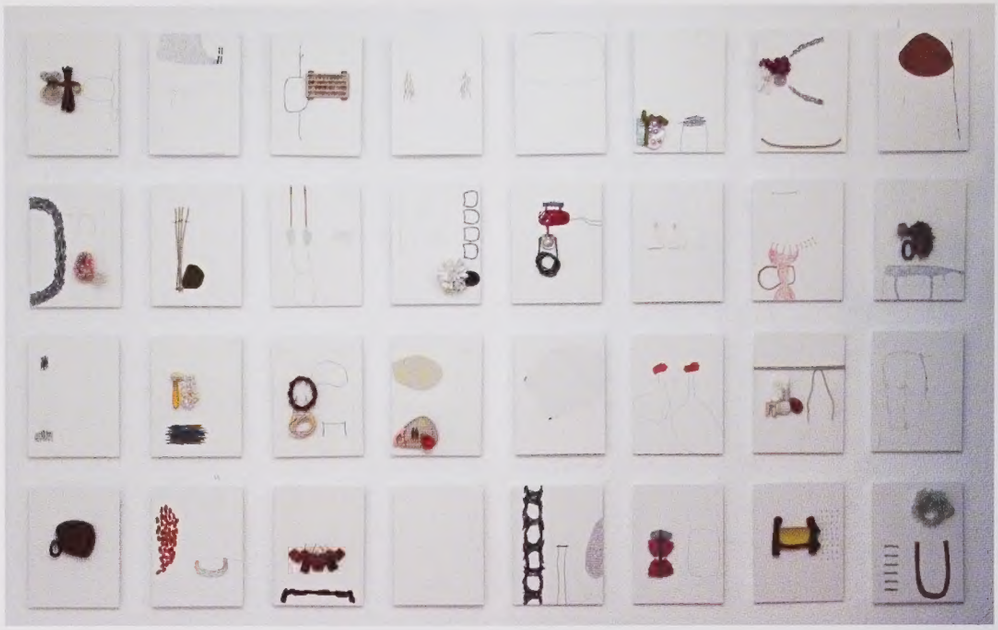
clockwise from top left
Iris Nieuwenburg
Dutch Glory (brooch), 2004
silver, synthetic resin, antique postcard, Victorian picture paper

Constanze Schreiber
Memento Mori IV (pendants), 2006
silver, used horseshoe nails
2 1/2 x 2 1/2 x 3/4"

Ineke Heerkens
Flourish Green (brooch), 2005
silver, textile, silkscreen ink
5 x 6 x 2 1/2"

Photos: Corriette Schoenaerts

REVIEWS



"IRIS BODEMER AND MARIA PHILLIPS: SCULPTURE BECOMES JEWELRY"

SPIRAL AT GROVER THURSTON GALLERY
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON
NOVEMBER 2 – DECEMBER 2, 2006

by JUDY WAGONFIELD

Flip the title "Sculpture becomes Jewelry" to "Jewelry becomes Sculpture." Now you have a glimpse into the chicken-and-egg dichotomy of this exhibition, curated by Sharon Campbell. But that merely scratches the surface. The exhibit's innovation stretches well beyond re-categorizing objects, to fuse concepts of sculpture and jewelry into a third entity of "functional installation." Individual pieces surrender their identity to the assemblage; nevertheless, each brooch and necklace, when discovered, plucked, and worn, holds its own.

Artists Iris Bodemer (Pforzheim, Germany) and Maria Phillips (Seattle), seem nurtured by the pioneering and intellectual spirit of the late sculptor Eva Hesse. Perched on the cusp of virgin territory, they strive towards cohesive mosaics embedded with adornments for the human body. Making a single piece of jewelry is a cakewalk next this obstacle-ridden path, but both pull it off with panache.

Bodemer's work evolves from Minimalism, imposing strict conceptual restraints on its production. In this installation Bodemer "draws" with liquid or solid material on sixty-four 12-by-18-inch white boards. Half incorporate stunning brooches fashioned from clustered semi-precious stones, found objects, leather, and coiled strands of pearls bound by raffia or wool. An inherent rawness, drawn from the memory of her grandfather's ring wrapped in yarn and worn by her grandmother, dominates. Sparkling stones offset bleached driftwood. A brooch with smoky quartz crystals juxtaposes nature and industry through metal framework and wool.

Merged in a grid along the gallery's second-story catwalk, Bodemer's pieces evoke diverse responses. From the lower gallery floor, the installation looks like a quilt or abstract art series. The sporadic placement of brooches on the boards lends itself to a musical score, imagery inspired by the music of John Cage. Reflective and spontaneous, the work hides and reveals relationships that, as with issues in life, must be contemplated and addressed.

Phillips's work is the antithesis of Bodemer's restricted grid approach. Inspired by her first pregnancy and child, she focuses on interpretive portraits of her young daughter that mark moments from conception to birth. Beginning with DNA imagery, she travels through cell division, physical formation, and placental remains that herald new life.

Each piece, (some are wearable and some not), is constructed from copper, silver, stainless steel, and boiled and dried pig gut. Spherical shapes and layered constructions, cut into organic forms and "drawn" on with thread, perch on metal brackets mounted randomly on the wall and ceiling. The diaphanous material's translucent character mimics the softness and fragility of skin. *Portrait #8 (Heart)*, a mitral valve brooch shaped through electroforming and besotted with rust, references the artist as an older person giving birth.

Splashed across the wall like sculptural graffiti, the installation exudes a palpable visceral mood. It juts into a viewer's personal space as does a pregnant belly. The ephemeral body-bud shapes cry for attention like newborn babies. If the fetal forms were to creep further across the ceiling and down the opposite wall, the installation would envelop viewers in a comforting womb. As is, we stand outside, viewing a sonogram that details developing connective tissue, bones, and muscles; biomorphic elements reflecting life's mysterious forces.

As still lifes in 3-D, the installations bulge with ornamentation. Whether chaotic or ordered, asymmetrical or grid, they bridge the gap between "art" and "wearable art." Poised as supplicants, wondering, "Will she pick me?" the brooches await being chosen for the dance. When picked, each piece has its umbilical cord cut. It may leave the family, but as in reality, the connections remain in memories.

For Bodemer and Phillips, that is enough. As sophisticated artists whose cross fertilization has yielded a fluid realm, their sculpture and jewelry have married, yielding an unwritten language that satisfies whether stuck on the wall, on the body, or in the mind.

Judy Wagonfield is a freelance writer who lives in Seattle, Washington.

top
Iris Bodemer
Installation, 2005-06
mixed media
individual panels 18 x 12"

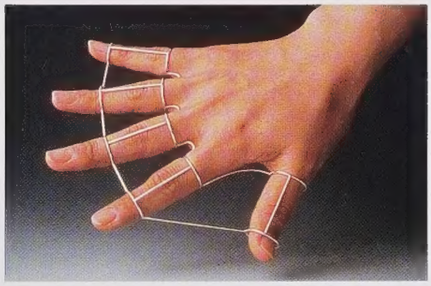
left
Maria Phillips
Portrait Series: Installation, 2006
brooches: gut, steel
approx 20 x 12'

SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICAN GOLDSMITHS

The Organization for Jewelers, Designers, and Metalsmiths

www.snagmetalsmith.org

by Dana Singer



top to bottom
Mary Ann Scherr receiving SNAG's Lifetime Achievement Award at the Memphis conference.

Work by the 2007 Educational Endowment Scholarship recipients:
Masako Onodera
Eruption Brooch, 2006
rubber, wool
4 x 3 x 2"

Sun Kyoung Kim
Restriction 02, 2006
silver
7 x 4 x 1"

Lilyana Bekic
Martha's Brass Knuckles, 2006
fine silver, delrin, found objects, polymer clay
3 3/4 x 4 3/4 x 7/8"

Newly elected SNAG board members
John Rais and
Stewart Thomson

SNAG Conference in Memphis

Six hundred people enjoyed a rousing good time at "Directions Unknown: Looking Forward, Learning from History," the SNAG conference in Memphis, Tennessee, held in June. Hosted by The Metal Museum, co-chairs James Wallace and Charles Ferryman assembled an impressive mix of speakers, bench demonstrations, exhibitions, Beale Street blues, BBQ, and metal on the Mighty Mississippi. The conference enjoyed significant support from Rio Grande and a private foundation. We also want to thank Charon Kransen Arts, Myron Toback, Inc., Bill Gangi/Multisensory Arts, and Otto Frei for their Platinum and Gold level sponsorships.

SNAG Conference 2008: Savannah

SNAG's next conference is already on the horizon. Hosted by the Savannah College of Art & Design, co-chaired by Lanelle Keyes and Bonnie Kubasta, "Crosscurrents: Diverse Solutions in a Global Environment" will be held March 5–8, 2008, at the Marriott in downtown Savannah, Georgia. Keynote speaker Sheila Hicks leads off a slate of presenters that includes Carlier Makigawa, Iris Eichenberg, and Richard Nelipovich.

Mary Ann Scherr Presented with Lifetime Achievement Award

Mary Ann Scherr received SNAG's prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award during the conference in Memphis. One of SNAG's founding members, Sherr is an internationally recognized artist, designer, educator, and metalsmith. She is also known globally for her research and development of electronic body monitors, as well as her development and copyright of a metal-etch process. Scherr's work is in the permanent collections of many major museums including the Vatican Museum of Art, the National Museum of American Art-Renwick Gallery, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Museum of Arts & Design. Educator Lynda LaRoche presented the award to Scherr during a ceremony that featured a retrospective look at Scherr's life and work. The award is an elegant sterling silver vessel created by SNAG member Cynthia Eid.

SNAG Educational Endowment Scholarships Awarded

The Educational Endowment Scholarships are SNAG's highest awards offered to college students. This year scholarships were awarded to graduate students Masako Onodera, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; Sun Kyoung Kim, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; and Lilyana Bekic, San Diego State University. Honorable Mentions went to David Choi, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; Kristi Sword, SUNY-New Paltz; Jennifer Halvorson, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign; and Tracy Lee Black, Indiana University.

SNAG Welcomes Two New Board Members

John Rais (studio blacksmith) was elected to the SNAG board of directors, and Stewart Thomson (studio jeweler) was elected SNAG's next Treasurer. SNAG sincerely thanks departing board members Angela Gleason, Melissa Huff, Ellen Wieske, and Peggy Eng (who served for six years) for their years of dedicated service and wise counsel.

Errata

We regret omitting the credit from the cover caption of our 2007 "Exhibition in Print." The necklace by Bruce Metcalf titled *Costa Rican with Lips* was courtesy Charon Kransen Arts, New York.

Dana Singer is executive director of SNAG.

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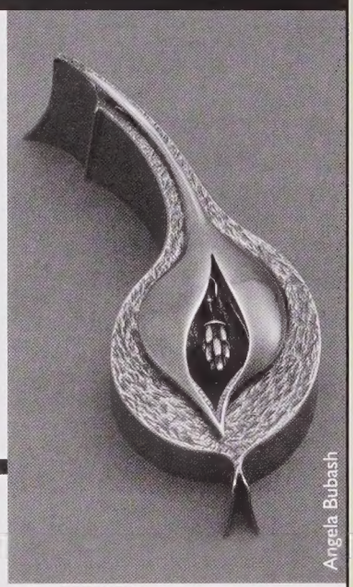
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image: Kari Rinn, fellow, 2007

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clockwise from top

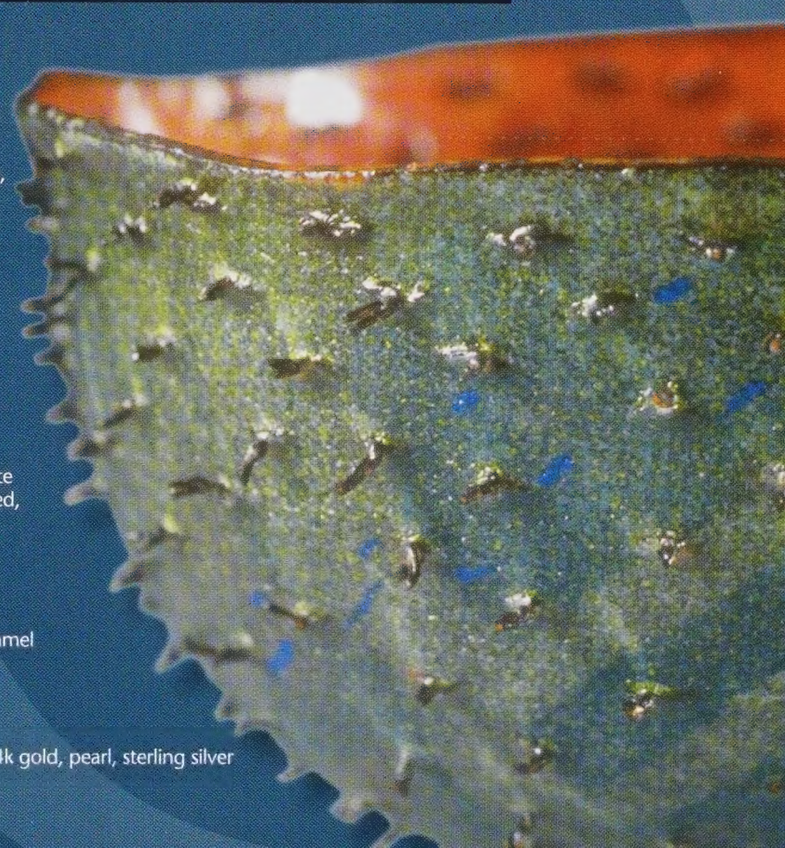
Douglas Harling
Title: Sea Saw
Description: 1-3/8"x2-1/4"x1/2", 22k gold, 14k gold pin mechanism, and freshwater pearls
Photo: Douglas Harling

Namu Cho
Title: Rings
Description: Damascus steel with 22k gold, 18k gold
Photo: Hap Sakwa Photography

(Issue #5 2006 Metalsmith)
Cover: Kevin Coates
Title: Snakes to Apples (cup) 2002
Description: height 6 1/2", nephryte jade, silver, parcel-gilt, part patinated, coral amber
Photo: Clarissa Bruce

Sarah Perkins
Title: Stubble Beggar's Bowl
Description: 3"x4"x4", copper, enamel
Photo: Sarah Perkins

Kiwon Wang
Title: Water Drop Series
Description: 2-1/2"x2-1/2"x3/8, 14k gold, pearl, sterling silver
Photo: Kiwon Wang



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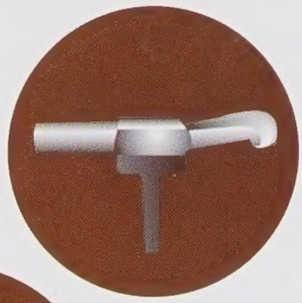

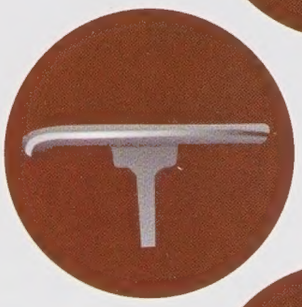

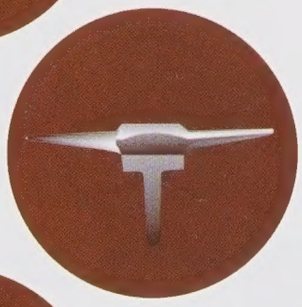

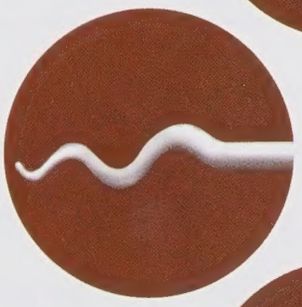

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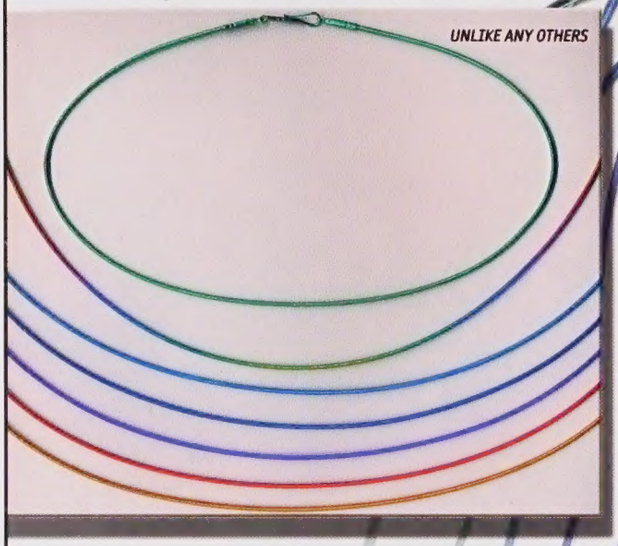

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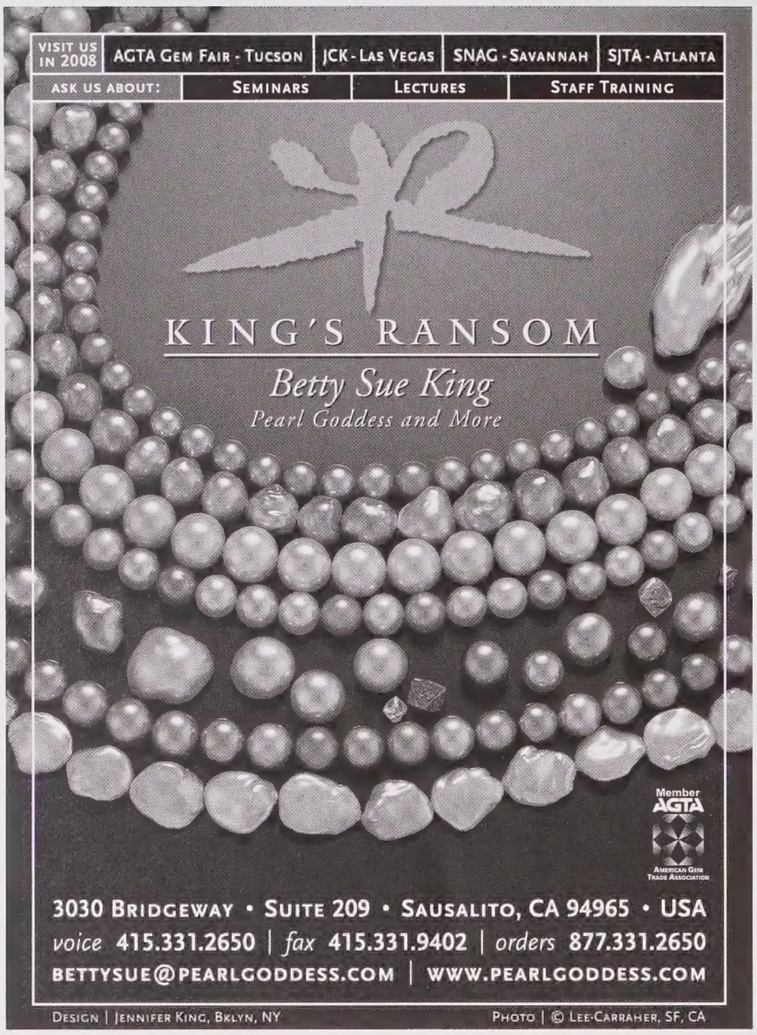

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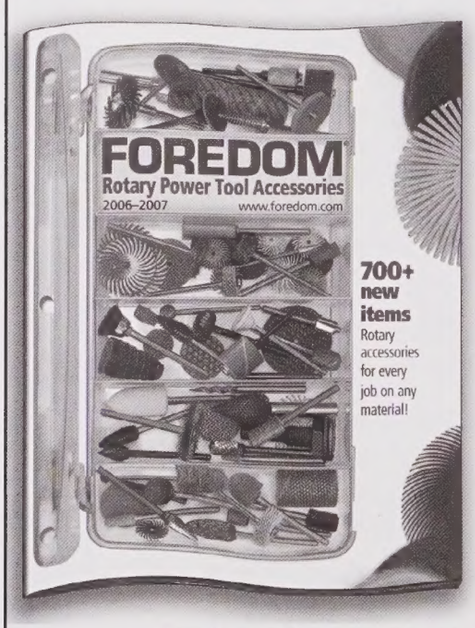

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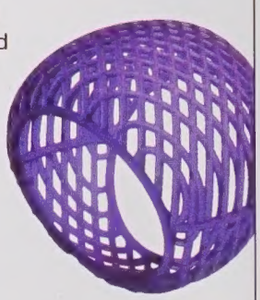

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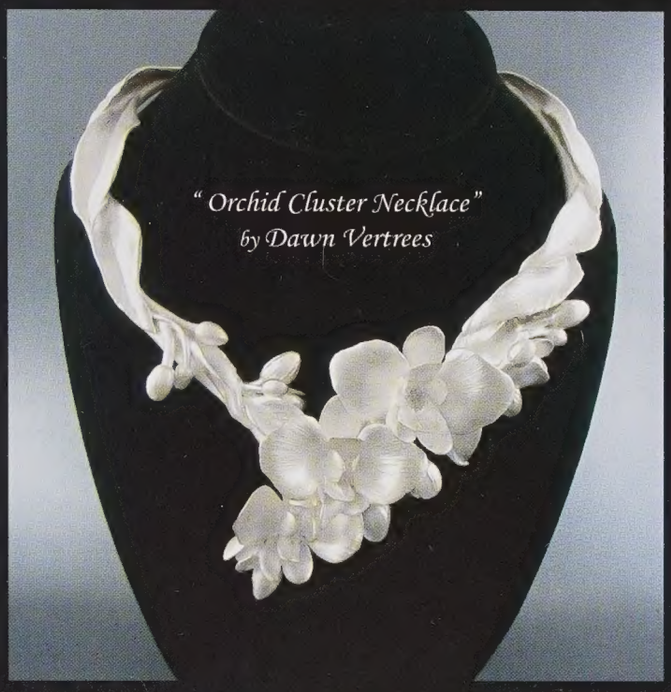

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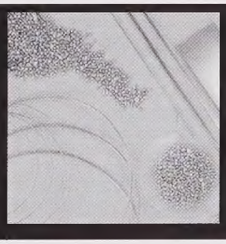

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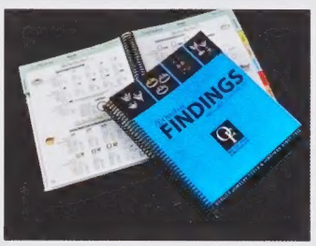

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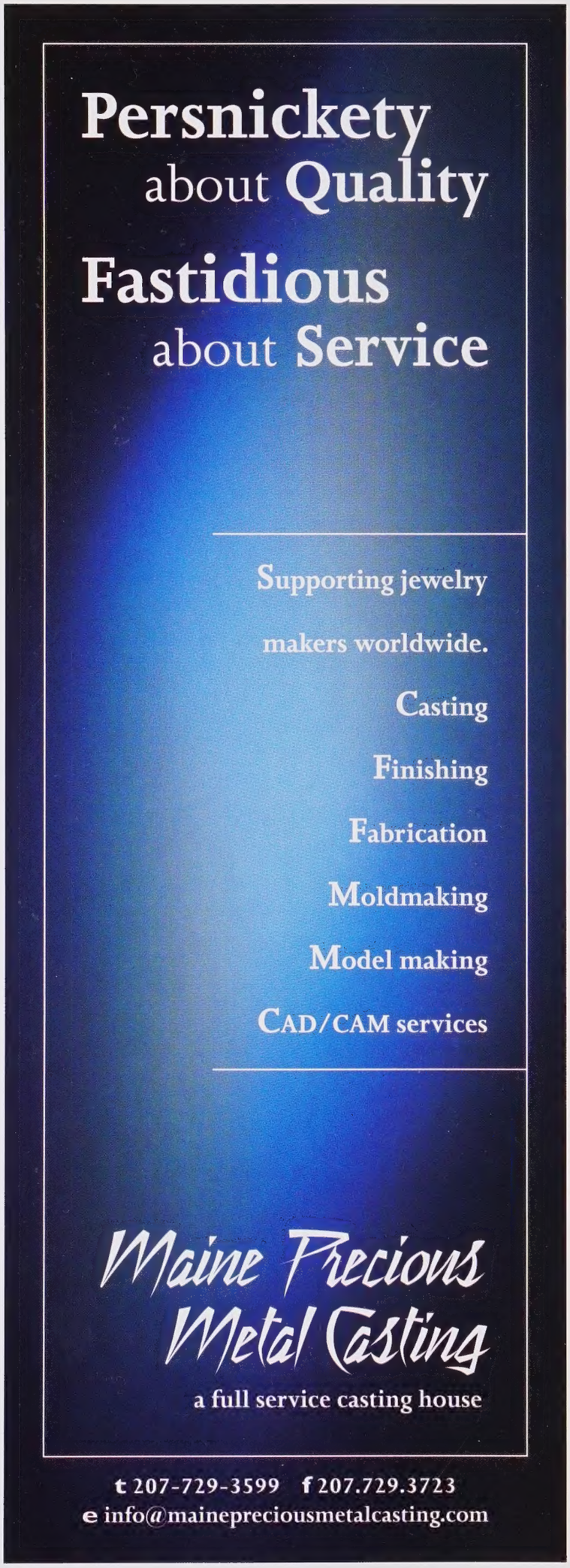

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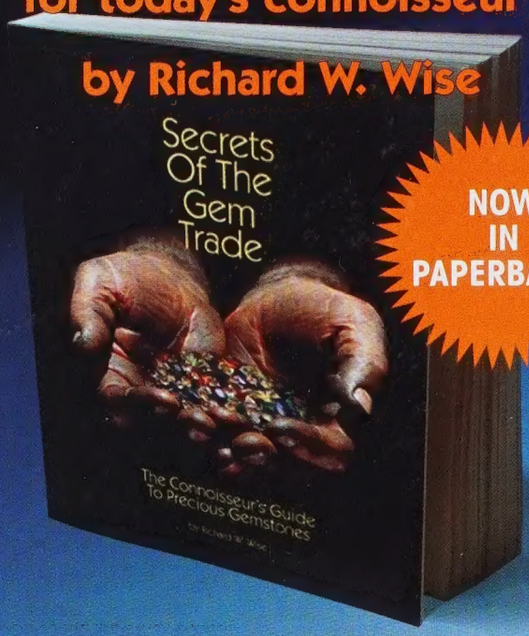

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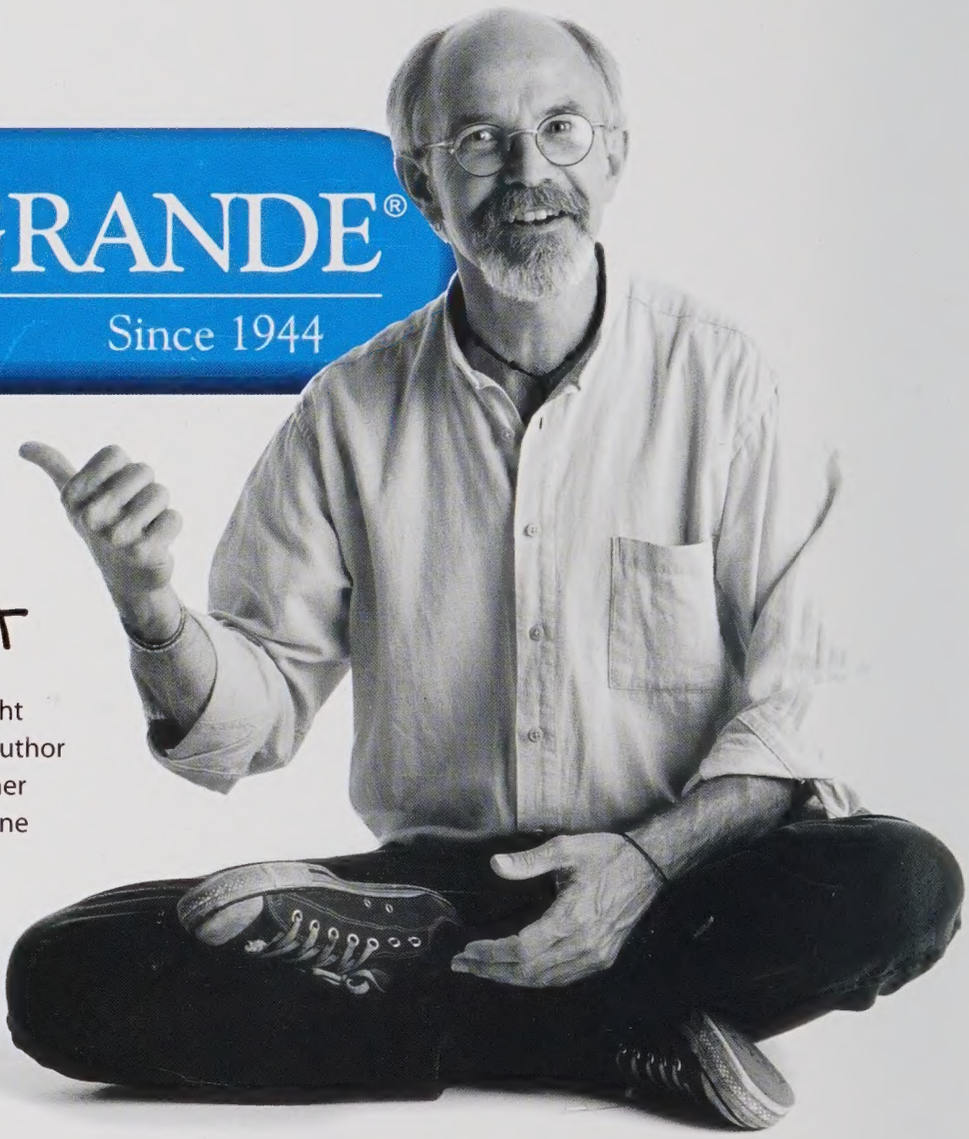

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